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THEORIZING CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION
AMONG THE ANCIENT AND EARLY MEDIEVAL
MEDITERRANEAN, NEAR EAST AND ASIA
EDITED BY MATTHEW P. CANEPA

CONTENTS

- 7 **PREFACE**
Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction Among Ancient and
Early Medieval Visual Cultures
Matthew P. Canepa, Guest Editor
- 31 **ARE THERE HYBRID VISUAL CULTURES?**
Reflections on the Orientalizing Phenomena in the Mediterranean
of the Early First Millennium BCE
Nassos Papalexandrou
- 50 **NATURALIZING THE EXOTIC**
On the Changing Meanings of Ethnic Dress in Medieval China
Kate A. Lingley
- 81 **THE SPACE BETWEEN**
Locating “Culture” in Artistic Exchange
Bonnie Cheng
- 121 **DISTANT DISPLAYS OF POWER**
Understanding Cross-Cultural Interaction Among the Elites of Rome,
Sasanian Iran, and Sui–Tang China
Matthew P. Canepa
- 155 **FOREIGN VESTURE AND NOMADIC IDENTITY ON THE BLACK SEA
LITTORAL IN THE EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY**
Costume from the Chungul Kurgan
Warren T. Woodfin, Yuriy Rassamakin, Renata Holod
- 188 **PATTERNS OF FLIGHT**
Middle Byzantine Adoptions of the Chinese *Feng Huang* Bird
Alicia Walker

PREFACE

Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction Among Ancient and Early Medieval Visual Cultures

SCHOLARSHIP ON THE VISUAL CULTURES of ancient and early medieval Eurasia has recently benefited from art history's renewed interest in questions that transcend political and cultural boundaries.¹ Issues of cross-cultural interaction, however, have not enjoyed from art historians working on the ancient and early medieval worlds a level of critical attention commensurate with the number of problems arising from the material. As a result, many of those who work in the arts and cultures of the Mediterranean, Near East, and Asia have found themselves drawn closer together, but without a common vocabulary or debate with which to engage.

The organizing goal of this volume of *Ars Orientalis* is to highlight these theoretical considerations and provide a forum where art historians of the ancient and medieval worlds can explore these problems of cross-cultural interaction with greater rigor. It does not intend to provide a comprehensive theoretical overview or art historical survey of Eurasian artistic interchange, nor an overarching theory. Rather, it aims to contribute critical perspectives drawn from premodern visual cultures to the wider theoretical conversation. The papers contained herein critically evaluate some of the most important problems encountered in the material: the cross-continental movement and selective appropriation of objects and motifs through trade; the impact of new ways of seeing, being seen, and acting introduced by these objects; the role of art and ritual in negotiations of power among empires; and representations and self-portrayals of ethnicity and gender within and beyond dominant visual cultures.

The volume's authors explore these issues at several important moments of exchange in the ancient and medieval Mediterranean, Central and Western Asia, and China. The problems under study include well-known focuses of scholarship, like the problem of the use and impact of the ancient Near East in the Mediterranean during the "Orientalizing period" of the first millennium BCE, or the impact of the Central Asian world on Sui–Tang China (ca. 398–907 CE). Others, such as confrontation between steppe and urban civilizations in early medieval Central Asia, competition between the Roman, Persian and Chinese courts, and Middle Byzantine responses to inspirations brought in on the Silk Road, cut across conventional scholarly boundaries. In tackling these problems, the papers examine archaeological discoveries that up until now have not been critically evaluated nor integrated into art historical narratives.

Nassos Papalexandrou's paper asks new questions about a phenomenon that is central to the development of Greek visual culture. During the "Orientalizing period," Greeks and Etruscans selectively appropriated many aspects of the visual cultures of the ancient Near East. Papalexandrou considers not only the impact of ancient Near Eastern objects on Greek art, but the impact of Near Eastern ways of seeing on Greek experience and use of vision. Two papers focus on the interaction

between China and Central Asia during the Sui and Tang dynasties of China. Kate Lingley's investigates the interaction between local identities and larger external "cultural others" that occurred among several Silk Road cultures and in the Chinese courtly center, and tracks the differing trajectories of meaning of previously foreign objects and images that moved into China from the West. Bonnie Cheng analyzes the funerary monuments of Sogdian communities outside the Tang capital of Chang'an. These inhabit, she argues, a third space between the Chinese and Iranian spheres.

My article concentrates on the processes and practices that drove exchange among the elites of the great empires of late antiquity: late Rome, Sasanian Persia, and Sui–Tang China. I offer a theoretical model that evaluates the relationship between "universal" empires and the impact of their interaction on the peoples who found themselves in the interstices. Warren Woodfin, Yuriy Rassamakin, and Renata Holod analyze the contents of an early thirteenth-century Kıpçak burial excavated in the southern Ukrainian steppe, the Chungul Kurgan. Their study argues that this nomadic people of the Pontic steppe actively and creatively manipulated the meaning of objects and costume from the Byzantine and Islamic courts: the Kıpçak burial turned foreign gifts, which were intended to show their subordination, into displays of power and independence. Alicia Walker investigates the cross-continental—and trans-temporal—movement of the Chinese phoenix, the *feng huang*, into luxury items of the Middle Byzantine period (843–1204). The objects that she studies present an intriguing case, as they bear the few images of the *feng huang* to appear in Europe and the Near East before the Mongol empire.

Critical Approaches to Cross-Cultural Interaction

The authors of this volume respond to several strains of discourse in the humanities and social sciences that have confronted aspects of cultural interaction. I do not pretend to have mastery over the vast array of rich and challenging literature detailed below. I hope merely to communicate the basic outlines of those debates that have been especially influential to the authors of this volume and the wider discipline of art history, and identify theoretical approaches not previously integrated that could be productive for scholars of the interaction of ancient visual cultures. These debates have arisen from differing disciplinary perspectives and motivations, and responded to a range of temporal and cultural situations. Some lines of inquiry have coalesced into interdisciplinary efforts, such as postcolonial or globalization studies, which certain fields of art history have at times drawn from or contributed to. Other traditions of scholarship have remained relatively discrete. With regards to the study of the ancient world from an architectural and object-based point of view, archaeology has generated an impressive bibliography, concentrating espe-

cially on evidence of trade, movement of cultural practices, and technology transfer.² Building on earlier, more traditional efforts, art historians have returned in the last two decades to examining important moments of cross-cultural interaction, some from a critical perspective.³

Avoiding dead-end searches for, or comparisons between “original” or “pure” cultural structures, the most productive theoretical approaches for understanding cross-cultural interaction share an insistence that cultures are not unitary monoliths but dynamic interrelated systems continually recreated by daily or generational human practice.⁴ Such approaches do not assume that cultures or an individual’s cultural identities are static, much less pure. This focus on practice enables researchers to ask questions that extend beyond identifying cultural provenance to the means by which cultural traditions, including art, are recreated and reinterpreted. It allows the researcher an interpretive field wherein art objects and images are not only representative of cultures, but take an active role in constituting and transforming them. Social scientists, steeped in decades of poststructural and postprocessualist research, have been imbued with critical discussion of rituals and ceremonies, both prestigious and drawn from everyday life. Yet the impact of the visual on both “pragma” and “praxis” is still challenging to and being negotiated by art historians and anthropologists alike.⁵

Anthropology, economics, international relations, and political science have shared an interest in contemporary problems of globalization and transnational studies.⁶ An important related debate has grown up around ideas of world-systems and theories of world history.⁷ These efforts analyze how societies mutually affect and constrain each other in their interactions. Focused on the impact of large, hegemonic poles of power, such as the Russian and British empires in the nineteenth century or American and Soviet spheres of influence in the twentieth century, world-systems approaches have studied how these hegemonic cores exploit and draw resources from contested peripheries and compete for ideological and cultural ascendancy over them.⁸ Research has focused on economic and cultural conflicts that stem from the efforts of dominated peripheries to resist and subvert the hold of the imperial center while competing hegemons attempt to destabilize and incorporate the spheres of influence of their competitors. Initially concentrating on contemporary situations or those of European colonialism, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians working on the premodern world have been increasingly interested in exploring wider systems of cultural contact from less Eurocentric perspectives.⁹

An overlapping field of debate in anthropology and sociology has sought to understand both the wider dynamics of cultural interaction and the role of local communities or even individuals in these processes.¹⁰ Bringing attention to the fact

that overarching systems unfold on a local level has been one of the key interpretive standpoints of this debate, and has been an important corrective to a discrete focus on large systems.¹¹ The anthropology of globalization has studied flows of capital, people, goods, images, and ideologies resulting from global interconnection.

The deliberate fusions of iconographic, architectural, and ritual traditions that can arise from globalization touch on an issue often raised in certain lines of religious scholarship. Stemming from reformation and counter-reformation theology and early modern missionary work, one line of inquiry, to which studies of the early Christianities in the Mediterranean and Christianity in Latin America are indebted, was originally concerned with issues of religious syncretism.¹² While historians and anthropologists of religion continue to be interested in problems of cross-cultural interaction, the term “syncretism” has increasingly fallen out of favor because historically it connoted either an attempt to weed out foreign influences or search for a lost “pure” tradition.¹³ In general, the critical study of the history of religions has become more closely allied with the interests of anthropological critical theory outlined above. The field of Indo-European linguistics, archaeology, and religion presents another sustained, yet fraught, tradition of looking across cultures. With the ultimate goal of reconstructing a single culture rather than studying the dynamics of interaction, earlier efforts stood on the periphery of these critical debates.¹⁴

The study of European colonialism and postcolonial situations, on the other hand, has generated a rich interpretive vocabulary with which to evaluate the cultural impact of empire, including such terms and topics as creolization, hybridity, diaspora, migration, and subalternity. Several strands in the social sciences and humanities have contributed to this interdisciplinary conversation, including art history.¹⁵ While these theoretical debates can sometimes offer broad insights, they require careful evaluation and qualification. Theorists dealing with contemporary issues of cross-cultural interaction often concentrate on situations marked by oppression, coercion, and unequal power relationships, a constant in the premodern world as well. Much of this scholarship has focused on voicing the concerns and defending the rights of disenfranchised and underprivileged peoples. Some scholarship on the subject, especially from anthropological and cultural studies backgrounds, has even proceeded with an explicitly stated goal of defending dominated groups against the onslaught of governmental, corporate, or elite attempts to unlawfully or unethically take their cultural goods or force assimilation, and as such is designed as an outline for action.¹⁶ While its aims might be admirable, it presents a markedly different landscape in terms of basic questions of ethnic identity, use and understanding of technology, the written word, the role of religion, and the function of images from those in the ancient and medieval worlds. Although

such literature cannot provide a methodology that is directly applicable to ancient and medieval cultures, a dialogue between the two does have the potential to offer insights on both situations.

Dynamics of Cross-Cultural Interaction in Ancient and Early Medieval Eurasia

All the papers in this volume consider at one point or another the global systems that affected the objects and images under study. Communications technology and transportation have compressed contemporary humanity's sense of time and space to an unprecedented degree; however, the fact that technology and economic, ideological, and political processes facilitate or even compel a global flow of capital and ideas is not unique to our century, nor are the extension of local concerns and social networks geographically and the de- and re-territorialization of culture. While the critical approaches outlined above have the potential to provide theoretical traction, they do not necessarily capture all the physical and intellectual processes of exchange by which ideas, objects, images, and practices moved cross-continently in ancient and medieval Eurasia. In rare but important instances, global powers instigated and funded such movement through centrally controlled diplomatic missions and, at certain historical moments, elaborate institutions for receiving envoys. This was certainly the case for the diplomatic exchanges that, during brief periods, occurred between the empires of the Seleucids and Mauryas, between Rome, the Arsacids, Kuṣāṇas and Han China, and in late antiquity, between the late Roman empire, Sasanian Iran, Sui–Tang China, and the Turkic steppe empires. After the fall of the Sasanian dynasty such exchanges resumed on a smaller scale between the Tang dynasty, the Umayyad caliphate, and Byzantium. Smaller states, such as the nascent Japanese empire, the Gupta and Pallava kingdoms of India, the Vandal, Gothic or Frankish kingdoms of early medieval Europe, or the Hun, Kidārite or Kıpçak steppe kingdoms further east, were often drawn into the intrigues of the more established empires. The Mongol empire provides the grandest example of all, incorporating most of Eurasia as its vassals.

Along with diplomatic contacts, interlocking merchant networks formed the core of Eurasian exchange, utilizing multiple sea and land routes.¹⁷ Syrian and Persian merchant ships connected the Mediterranean, the Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean with the South China Sea. Merchants from minorities within or on the peripheries of large empires, including Syrians, Jews, Bactrians, Sogdians, and Armenians, controlled the land routes from the Chinese capitals through Central Asia and the multiple routes into Iran and thence the Mediterranean or, by the northern route, the Black Sea.¹⁸ Eurasian trade moved a great deal of ornamental and luxury material, feeding the desires of the elites to distinguish themselves with

rare goods, images, and motifs. While material moved by ship or by camel caravan, cities were the true sites of mercantile and cultural exchange. The markets of imperial capitals such as Babylon, Chang'an, Ctesiphon, or Constantinople hosted the exchange of goods, as did the trading cities of the Tarim Basin, Transoxiana, or Southern India. The diversity of the markets, foreign settlements, and religious structures in cosmopolitan cities like Chang'an reflect this.¹⁹

The recurrent desire to distinguish themselves within their own social class — and from those below them — was the driving force behind the interests of many of the elites discussed in this volume, be they as far apart in time and space as Orientalizing Greece, Sasanian Iran, Tang China, the Kıpçak steppe, or Byzantium. It was also the motivation behind many instances of the movement, display, and integration of objects, motifs, or visualities from distant cultures. The ideas of Pierre Bourdieu and Daniel Miller have inspired much recent discussion of this phenomenon. Among other contributions, scholarship in many fields has found useful Bourdieu's analyses of how practice embodies and reproduces personal and cultural values as well as his theories on how one's social place affects one's tastes and practices.²⁰ Even in seemingly mundane acts of consumption, the use and display of visual material continually create, articulate, and define an individual's social, economic, and political place. Conversely, evidence of incorporation of a "foreign" image, motif, or ritual does not indicate a direct cultural transfer. Different objects could have different meanings according to how they are used by new owners and users and interpreted by the differently conditioned eyes of the new host society. Even in a complex situation where an individual might acquire an art object such as a Christian or Buddhist devotional painting along with religious instruction which would ensure the recipient, in this case a convert, gained a direct understanding of the original function, its subsidiary meaning would be different given the status of the religion and thus the object in its new cultural home.

While profits motivated merchants and prestige drove elites,²¹ adherents of the great missionary religions, Buddhism, Christianity, and Manichaeism, consciously used the merchant networks as conduits for their faiths. They not only brought new visual cultures with them, but their efforts to convert and compete instigated artistic interaction on a number of levels. Compared to Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, Manichaeism was persecuted almost everywhere it spread.²² While the other religions often appropriated what was useful or prestigious within the host culture, Manichaeans were especially adept at cloaking their own ideas and practices in the visual and ritual forms of the dominant tradition.²³ From its inception in the mid-third century the Manichaean religion demonstrated a remarkable ingenuity for creative adaptation. The prophet Mani founded the "Religion of Light" in the Sasanian empire and it spread into the Mediterranean and Central Asia, adopting

elements of Zoroastrianism and Christianity. In Central Asia, Manichaean communities appropriated many religious, ritual, and visual elements of their Christian and Buddhist competitors.²⁴ Even though Manichaeism served as an official state religion for a period under the Uighur rulers, Buddhism remained the most widely practiced religion and Manichaeism's greatest competitor.²⁵ This environment engendered an atmosphere of simultaneous exchange and competition, on both an artistic and textual level. In most cases Manichaeism was the assimilator.²⁶ Manichaeans adopted some of the same practices as Buddhism, including the use of temple banners and cave sanctuaries. While these practices might be labeled "hybrid" or "syncretic," they expressed entirely Manichaean concepts despite a superficial similarity to Buddhist traditions.²⁷ We find similar occurrences in Manichaean visual culture, where deities such as elephant-headed Gaṇeśa, or Viṣṇu boar-headed avatar, Varāha, are portrayed with an iconography traceable to South Asia.²⁸

While the wider dynamics of diplomacy, trade, empire, and religion compelled the movement of ideas and objects, local conditions determined the ways in which they were incorporated (or not) into native visual cultures. With deeply rooted local societies clashing with several waves of invaders, South Asia during the second century BCE through the third century CE evinces a number of especially complex visual cultures.²⁹ South Asia in this era provides a challenging body of evidence of Indian appropriation of Greek visual and ritual traditions, as local populations adapted aspects of Greek visual culture to the Buddhist religion.³⁰ The Mauryan empire's unification of much of the subcontinent and the emergence of Buddhism as an imperial religion without a doubt provided two important templates for succeeding South Asian sovereigns; however, it was the Greek kingdoms of Hellenistic Bactria and South Asia that set the most deeply influential precedents for later Scythian, Kuṣāṇa, and even Gupta images.

Like their Ptolemaic and Seleucid competitors in Egypt and Iran, the Greek kings of Bactria and India developed complex strategies for navigating between several global and local idioms of power. They responded simultaneously to Macedonian, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions of kingship. Early in the dynasty, the Ptolemaic kings maintained a more or less discrete split between images of power intended for the native Egyptian population and images intended for the Greek aristocracy and the wider, global Greek world, only later producing what could be termed "hybrid" images.³¹ In addition to supporting native Babylonian cults, the Seleucid kings appear to have sponsored temples that delicately blended Mesopotamian and Greek architecture and cult.³² The Hellenistic rulers of Bactria and India quite early on innovated culturally hybrid figural and architectural idioms depending on the audience.³³ The Greek kings of Bactria and northern India communicated in a "purely Greek" idiom to the wider Hellenistic world with their higher denomina-

tion coinage, while their silver and bronze coinage, meant for their own kingdoms, became increasingly “bilingual” both in language and image. Reflecting a greater involvement with South Asia, as well as more cultural complexity, later Indo-Greek kings such as Menander evolved an especially hybrid type of kingship, with South Asian forms and practices blended seamlessly with Hellenistic ones.³⁴ From his coins as well as records in South Asian and Greek sources, we know this king portrayed himself both as a successor to Alexander and as *dhārmika dharmarāja* (righteous dharma-king).³⁵ Whereas Indo-Greek kingship engaged primarily the Hellenistic and South Asian idioms, the advent of the Scythians added a third element to the mix, that is, Iranian steppe culture. In effect, the Śakas responded to this third “global sphere” and incorporated it into the South Asian visual culture of kingship.³⁶ Buddhist aristocratic and monastic patrons, in turn, adapted elements of Classical visual culture to image the Buddhist religion. It was useful as it was an “aristocratic common culture” and prestigious medium which could be readily understood throughout the Near East, South and Central Asia, something very attractive for a religion seeking converts across Hellenized Asia.³⁷

Although transported and shaped by the forces of diplomacy, commerce, and political power, images and art objects themselves had an independent agency to change cultures. Art historians and anthropologists alike have found analyses of object agency productive and often challenging, especially the observation that objects can occupy the social roles of active, sentient beings.³⁸ This can provide new ways of examining the role of art objects in interactions among cultures and their more active role in transforming their significance in a new context. The ancient and medieval world presents an array of situations where objects, from sculptures and paintings to manuscripts and even buildings, could be imbued not just with religious significance, but divine presence or the constituents of political power.³⁹ While an art object, architectural form, or ornamental motif had no meaning outside the uses and estimation of a patron, consumer, or viewer, visual material itself could introduce new ways of seeing, or “visualities,” to a host culture along with simple forms.⁴⁰ The dynamic interaction between image, object, and practical context affected both prestigious objects and activities, such as diplomatic gifts, tribute exchanges, or royal investiture ceremonies, and simple, almost ephemeral movements of manuscripts, relics, personal devotional images, amulets, and spells. The impact of Buddhism on the visual culture of China provides an intriguing example of new practices and ways of seeing the world introduced and integrated into a host culture, as does the taste for Classical visual culture among the empires of post-Hellenistic Iranian nomads, or Indian ivories in Rome, or Roman luxury goods in South Asia, or exchanges between the Byzantine, Islamic, and Western European worlds.⁴¹ Considering again the case of Central Asian Manichaeism, this interpre-

tive strategy requires one to ask if the Manichaeans gained something more from their appropriation of prayer flags, stupas, and the iconography of “Hindu” gods. How much did new ways of engaging artistic and architectural material affect the experience of their religion? We can ask these same questions of many cultural situations, across the spectrum of power differentials and levels of understanding and intention of the donors and receivers.

A Test Case: The Mongol World Empire

The Mongol empire is an illuminating case with which to conclude this consideration of the problems of cross-cultural interaction. The court practices of the Mongols, and their visual culture and those of their vassals, provide a stunning view of how complex the pathways of these overlapping motivations, objects, images, and practices could be. Given their power to meld techniques and images and transform visual cultures, Mongol-era textiles, investiture practices, structures and manuscripts provide an intriguing chain of examples. As the Mongols built their empire, silk robes of honor and the massive ceremonies at which they were bestowed and worn served as a powerful imperial tool of political and cultural integration. These robes simultaneously defined the owner’s membership and rank in the extended family of the Mongol court.⁴² The Mongols preferred gold brocade (New Persian *našij*, Chinese *nashishi*) to make *jisün* robes — worn for all state occasions — and were responsible for setting up large imperial workshops to produce it.⁴³ Mongol practices additionally inspired the spread of the robes’ imagery into new and quite unexpected mediums and contexts. The historical sources of numerous cultural traditions relate that whenever the Mongols sacked a city, the craftsmen and their families were spared and transported to the capital while the majority of the inhabitants were put to the sword.⁴⁴ This created a mass movement of craftsmen from eastern Iran to Central Asia and then eventually to China that is recorded in a range of sources. As a result of these movements, the newly created capital Dadu became one of the main centers for the production of *našij*, and the site of great artistic and technical exchange.⁴⁵

The robes were worn with patterned cuffs and collars (“cloud collars”). Many of the images the robes and collars carried were borrowed from Chinese visual culture, but took on unique importance through the Mongols’ specific political interpretation of their significance. According to the *Yuan shih* (History of the Yuan Dynasty), the Mongols adopted sumptuary laws intended to reserve the symbolic power of certain imagery for the imperial court.⁴⁶ In 1270 the court prohibited weaving the sun, moon, dragons, and tigers on silk and satin fabric as well as depicting dragons and rhinoceroses to decorate horse saddles.⁴⁷ As these symbols were invested with greater political power and courtly significance, they spread to many

of the visual cultures of the Mongol empire, appearing in new contexts and materials and for different purposes.

From donatives given to the most humble of Franciscan missionaries to the investiture of client kings, the Mongol sovereigns of Iran and China articulated their relationship with their courtiers through textiles. This hierarchy manifested itself most acutely in the great ceremonies and festivals. The *jisün* regularly appear when the sources describe the accession of a khan or the court's many celebrations and audiences held for demonstrations of fealty on the part of subject kings. The first references to the robes come from the reign of Genghis Khan in 1209, when Genghis rewarded with a *jisün* robe the Uighur official who had convinced the Idiq-qut to submit to the khan. The tradition and significance of the *jisün* were maintained by Genghis's successors and the robes regularly appear when the sources describe the accession of a khan or an annual celebration of some sort. For example, Juvaini relates that when Ögödei assumed the throne in 1229 those in attendance wore a different color robe every day: "All that day till nightfall they debated together with gaiety and friendly emulation. And in like manner for full forty days they donned each day new clothes of different colour and quaffed cups of wine, at the same time discussing the affairs of the kingdom."⁴⁸ On a mundane level, investiture and donatives composed a formalized method for paying out salaries or giving rewards. The khans paid everybody from guards to client kings with bolts of silk and silk clothes. On a sociopolitical level investiture ceremonies concretized the existing hierarchy and made tangible both the officials' and client kings' legitimacy to act on the khan's behalf and, most importantly, their subordination to him. However, once away from court, when a client king would wear luxury silk clothes given to him by his Mongol overlord, the clothes and their insignia became marks of aristocratic distinction in that culture, as they were reserved for the king and his courtiers alone.

The wide distribution of Mongol textiles had the secondary and unintended consequence of providing a prestigious conduit for the robes' imagery, spreading it throughout Eurasia. The earliest appearance of dragons, phoenixes, and lions inspired by the robes of honor emerges in one of the most distant kingdoms over which the Mongols ruled: Armenian Cilicia on the southeastern Mediterranean coast of Anatolia.⁴⁹ While the sovereigns of Eurasia futilely resisted the advance of the Mongol empire and were one by one brutally exterminated, Het'um I (1226–70 CE), the sovereign of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia (1198–1375 CE), took the diplomatic initiative.⁵⁰ In 1247 he sent his brother, Smbat, to the Mongol court in Karakorum, and in 1253 journeyed to the court himself to offer submission and seal an alliance with the Great Khan Möngke against the Muslim powers. In sparing his kingdom depredations of the sort suffered by the Caliphate, Rus', Hungary, or Poland, Het'um ushered in fifty-eight years of active military and political coopera-

tion with the Mongols.⁵¹ Because of its place in the Mongol empire, the kingdom prospered from the Silk Road trade passing from the West to the Far East through its port of Ayas and Armenians served as merchants and official couriers throughout the Near East and Central Asia. Spices, silk, gems, drugs, and other luxuries were exported, and woollen cloths, linens, furs and other manufactured goods were imported from the West.⁵²

Little remains to serve as a monument to this unprecedented period of cross-continental exchange except for three brilliant illuminated folios in two manuscripts.⁵³ These manuscripts appeared within a short, three-year period (from 1286 to 1289): they are a gospel copied in 1289 for the Archbishop John, brother of King Het'um I (Matenadaran Library, Yerevan 197), and a full lectionary created for Prince Het'um in 1286, three years before his accession to the throne as King Het'um II (Yerevan 979).⁵⁴ They integrate several visual motifs appropriated from Mongol imagery of imperial power. A folio of John's gospel (141 verso) contains a full-page portrait of the archbishop celebrating the ordination of a young monk.⁵⁵ John's alb, emerging from underneath his cope, displays a dragon chasing a flaming pearl, a motif common in Central Asian textiles of the Mongol period. Folio 293 carries an elaborate headpiece with Christ Emmanuel at its center, and two gray Mongol felines that flank the central disk that contains Christ's bust. Below this main section are two more felines, again portrayed in motion toward the center yet casting a glance back to the open mouth of a serpent that threatens to engulf them. An elaborate decorated chapter heading also dominates folio 334, forming a tri-lobed arch under which the text begins. To the right and left, filling in the interior space formed by the arch, lie symmetrically composed mirror images of the same scene: a dragon in combat with a phoenix. A frontally positioned phoenix with wings outstretched and tail feathers flowing rises in the center of the thick ornamental outline that encloses the arch. The birds all belong to the *luan* "species" of phoenix and have long flowing tail feathers and heads with feathers streaming off them.

The manuscripts reflect several strategies by which the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia responded to Mongol visual culture and integrated it into that of its own aristocratic hierarchy. Gifts of silk clothes that the khans gave the Armenians as donatives and during investiture ceremonies reinforced their significance.⁵⁶ The dragon chasing a flaming pearl on John's alb in the manuscript parallels Mongol textiles and owed its presence to the political dynamics outlined above; however, it had a very different meaning in the context of the Cilician court than in Mongol ceremony. It became a symbol of prestige rather than submission. The Cilician court appropriated the dragon and the phoenix, symbolic of Mongol imperial power, to be the symbol of Het'umid royal grandeur, fit even to be incorporated into the holiest object in the Armenian Apostolic church, the gospel lectionary. Once the motif

appears not just on a garment, but in an illuminated manuscript, a whole new set of meanings and correspondences envelop it and present new possibilities stemming from the art and ritual of the liturgical object.

The Mongol rulers of Iran, the Il-Khan dynasty (1256–1353), also forged a connection between the artistic traditions of Iran and the Mongol empire. They created dynastic images that expressed a new, deliberately fused, visual repertoire of power that claimed both cultural traditions and spoke to both powerbases.⁵⁷ The first appearance of the dragon and the phoenix in Iran, as well as other images and ornament drawn from Mongol visual culture, occurs in tiles that decorated a ceremonial hall of the Mongol summer palace built at the Azerbaijani site of Taḳt-e Solaymān.⁵⁸ Built at the instigation of Abagha Khan, possibly before his death in 1282, Taḳt-e Solaymān presents a very different dynamic compared to the Armenian material. Here, the Mongol elite fused Iranian and Mongol visual and architectural traditions of power. The palace was based on the Sasanian model, with four radiating *ayvāns*, an architectural expression of power in Iran since Arsacid times, used with great effect in Sasanian palaces and fire temples. The Mongol palace even rebuilt and incorporated the great *ayvān* of the Sasanian fire temple that had once stood on the site.⁵⁹ The Mongol imperial motifs were thus thrust into an Iranian medium among the Sasanian ruins of a fire temple that had deep and ancient symbolic connections to kingship in pre-Islamic Iranian culture.⁶⁰ Heraldizing an explosion of *kitā'ī* (Chinese) imagery in the book arts, the dragon and the phoenix appear physically and visually juxtaposed with images and poetry from Mongol-commissioned copies of the New Persian epic, the *Šāhnāma* (The Book of Kings). The palace offered rich, layered visual and textual symbolism drawn from its builders' Mongol origins, the site's pre-Islamic heritage, and even Iranian Sufism.⁶¹ No less important, the mausoleum of Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316) similarly integrated *kitā'ī* elements as it reinvented another significant Iranian architectural form, the domed mausoleum.⁶²

Presenting yet another dynamic of interaction, in the fourteenth century the Persian manuscript tradition adapted the Mongol dragon and phoenix for a different medium and different purposes, most strikingly in illustrations of the *Šāhnāma*.⁶³ What began as a unique assertion of Mongol power in the Iranian world soon appeared throughout Perso-Mongolian visual culture in architecture, ceramics, and painting. With continued inspiration from direct access to Chinese art, Persian miniature painting in the Mongol, Timurid, and Safavid periods selectively integrated many aspects of Chinese visual culture, reflecting both the elite's cosmopolitan tastes and the eclectic creativity of the artists' workshops. Phoenixes portray the fabulous *šimorg*, and, even more interestingly, the previously auspicious Chinese dragon embodies the monsters that Iranian epic heroes slay, and even serpents in biblical scenes, including the battling serpents of Moses and the sorcerers

of Pharaoh.⁶⁴ Besides motifs, artists working in the Persian idiom adapted Chinese use of space and treatment of the natural world, especially the landscape and sky.⁶⁵ Even apart from the creation of Taḳt-e Solaymān, which responded directly to the desires of the Mongol court, the wider phenomenon of *kitāʾī* imagery in Perso-Islamic visual culture was not a mere case of “influence.” Rather it emerged from complex negotiations between the objects, images, and buildings, the identities of the ruling dynasties, their global imperial ambitions, the wider elite tastes they affected, and the agency of artists.⁶⁶

Conclusion

It is worth considering the paradoxical nature of the objects, structures, and images that we study because, as art historians, our efforts begin with them.⁶⁷ On the one hand, their significance extends well beyond their physical properties, craftsmanship, or location. On the other hand, they cannot be understood once and for all by their contexts, since the contexts themselves are in a constant state of flux as objects and ideas change locations and cultures. The experience, training, and techniques of the artisans who crafted such objects certainly impacted their formal qualities, as did the tastes and motivations of their patrons; however, knowing whether an Armenian, Persian, or Chinese artist created an image does not tell the entire story either. An image or object could have as many “authors” as it had patrons, artists, or viewers, who reinterpreted it, or contexts that provided new and unexpected meanings. The shifting pathways and contexts of an object, image, or building can even include periods of time when it “dematerializes” and is transported in the memory of an artist or patron. Often transformed in the process, an image or architectural form can then be incarnated in a different location or cultural context. As it leaves the cognitive web of signification of a human mind, the image reemerges into the material world and a wider public web of meanings borne by objecthood and made possible by collective human praxis. In short, confronting the problem of cross-cultural interaction among visual cultures demands that we concentrate not just on the objects, their origins, contexts, patrons, or creators, but on the process and practices of cross-cultural interaction that provide the dynamic means of their transformation.

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NOTES

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1 The following are representative of recent art historical conferences or panels focusing on the ancient or medieval worlds: "Questioning 'Cultural Influence' in the Medieval Mediterranean," panel chaired by C. R. Mathews and C. Barret at the 2009 CAA Annual Meeting; "Islamic and Italian Art: Creating Shared Histories," panel chaired by A. Chong and S. Carboni at the 2008 CAA Annual Meeting (and see general note above); "Objects in Motion," a symposium convened by Hallie Meredith at the Bard Graduate Center (2007), to appear as an edited volume; "Artistic Legacies," panel chaired by Neil Schmid at "Crossing the Borders of China: A Conference on Cross-Cultural Interactions in Honor of Professor Victor Mair" (2003); and Jaynie Anderson, ed., *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence. The Proceedings of the 32nd*

International Congress in the History of Art (Carlton, Australia: Miegunah Press; Melbourne University Publishing, 2009).

2 Publications representative of the variety of the last decade's discourse include: Nicole Boivin and Dorian Fuller, "Shell Middens, Ships and Seeds: Exploring Coastal Subsistence, Maritime Trade and the Dispersal of Domesticates in and Around the Ancient Arabian Peninsula," *Journal of World Prehistory* 22 (2009): 113–80; Marlia Mundell Mango, ed., *Byzantine Trade, 4th–12th Centuries: The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange* (Farnham, England and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2009); Billie Jean Collins, Mary R. Bachvarova, and Ian C. Rutherford, eds., *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and their Neighbours* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2008); Matthew Liebmann and Uzma Rizvi, eds., *Archaeology and the Postcolonial Critique* (Lanham, Md.: AltaMira Press, 2008); Anthea Harris, *Incipient Globalization?: Long-Distance Contacts in the Sixth Century* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007); Susan La Niece, Duncan Hook and Paul Craddock, eds., *Metals and Mines: Studies in Archaeometallurgy* (London: Archetype Publications and The British Museum, 2007); Eivind Heldaas Seland, *The Indian Ocean in the Ancient Period: Definite Places, Translocal Exchange* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007); Janet Starkey, Paul Starkey, and Tony Wilkinson, eds., *Natural Resources and Cultural Connections of the Red Sea*, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs 5 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007); Rebecca Sweetnam, "Roman Knossos: The Nature of a Globalized City," *American Journal of Archaeology* (2007): 61–81; Victor H. Mair, *Contact and Exchange in the Ancient World* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006); Corinna Riva and Nicholas C. Vella, eds., *Debating Orientalization:*

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Change in the Ancient Mediterranean, Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology 10 (London and Oakville, Conn.: Equinox, 2006); S. Ratnagar, *Trading Encounters: From the Euphrates to the Indus in the Bronze Age*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004); Ricardo Eichmann and Hermann Parzinger, eds., *Migration und Kulturtransfer: der Wandel vorder- und zentralasiatischer Kulturen im Umbruch vom 2. zum 1. vorchristlichen Jahrtausend* (Bonn: Habelt, 2001); Sean Kingsley and Michael Decker, eds., *Economy and Exchange in the East Mediterranean During Late Antiquity: Proceedings of a Conference at Somerville College, Oxford, 29th May, 1999* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001); Mitchell S. Rothman, *Uruk Mesopotamia & Its Neighbors: Cross-Cultural Interactions in the Era of State Formation* (Santa Fe: School of American Research; Oxford: James Currey, 2001); Csanád Bálint, *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe im 6.–7. Jahrhundert* (Budapest: Archäologisches Institut der UAW, 2000).

- 3 Examples of historical moments, geographical spaces and empires that have received sustained study include the “Orientalizing Period” of ancient Greece: Ann C. Gunter, *Greek Art and the Orient* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); the Hellenistic and Kushan Near East and South Asia, especially the arts of Gandhara: Joe Cribb and Georgina Herrmann, eds., *After Alexander: Central Asia before Islam* (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2007); Elizabeth Errington et al., *From Persepolis to the Punjab: Exploring Ancient Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan* (London: British Museum Press, 2007); Vito Messina, ed., *Sulla via di Alessandro: da Seleucia al Gandhara* (Milan: Silvana, 2007);

Raymond Allchin et al., *Gandharan Art in Context: East-West Exchanges at the Crossroads of Asia* (New Delhi: Regency Publications, 1997); John Boardman, *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Elizabeth Errington and Joe Cribb, eds., *The Crossroads of Asia: Transformation in Image and Symbol* (Cambridge: The Ancient India and Iran Trust 1992);

the empires of Rome and Sasanian Iran: Matthew P. Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); exchange among the Umayyad then Abbasid caliphates, medieval Byzantium, and western medieval Europe: Anthony Cutler, “Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 247–78; idem, “Imagination and Documentation: Eagle Silks in Byzantium, the Latin West and Abbasid Baghdad,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 96 (2003): 67–72; idem, “The Emperor’s Old Clothes: Actual and Virtual Vesting and the Transmission of Power in Byzantium and Islam,” in M. Balard, É. Malamut, and J.-M. Spieser, eds., *Byzance et le monde extérieur: Contacts, relations, échanges* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005), 195–210; idem, several important earlier papers collected in *Byzantium, Italy and the North: Papers on Cultural Relations* (London: Pindar Press, 2000); Eva R. Hoffman, *Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), which contains several foundational essays; David Jacoby, “Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 197–240; Eva R.

Hoffman, “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,” *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 17–50; and Etele Kiss, “Byzantine Silversmiths’ Work around AD 1000 between China and the Ottonians: The Beszterec Holy Water Vessel,” *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): 301–314; the “Silk Road”: Andreas Kaplony and Philippe Forêt, eds., *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Regula Schorta, *Central Asian Textiles and Their Contexts in the Early Middle Ages* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2006); Susan Whitfield with Ursula Sims-Williams, *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith* (London: British Library, 2004); Frances Wood, *The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); James Watt and Anne Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles* (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1997); the journals *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* (Kamakura, 1990–), *Ars Orientalis* (Washington, D.C., 1954–) and the *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* (Detroit, 1987–) have hosted much scholarship on these topics as well as on exchange with India and China. See below in the essays by Bonnie Cheng and Kate Lingley for further bibliography. the concept of the Indian Ocean as a contact zone: Seland, *Indian Ocean in the Ancient Period*; Patel, *Communities and Commodities*; Abdul Sharif et al., eds., *Cultures of the Indian Ocean* (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1998); Islamic art and the Mongol empire: Yuka Kadoi, “Aspects of Iranian Art under the Mongols: *Chinoiserie* Reappraised” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2004) published as *Islamic*

- Clinoiserie* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2009); Ladan Akbarnia, "Khita'i: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom in Iran and Central Asia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2007); the groundbreaking monograph by Thomas Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Linda Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Nicola di Cosimo, "Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea Frontier (13th–14th c.): Convergences and Conflicts," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 391–424; and the concept of appropriation in art history: R. Nelson, "Appropriation," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. R. Nelson and R. Shiff, 2nd ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 160–73.
- 4 The word "practice" taken as a critical term is closely connected with the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Marshall Sahlins, Maurice Bloch, Michel de Certeau, and Talal Asad. Sahlins argued that practice unites the theoretical and actual in society and is the means by which the theoretical interacts with everyday events and they, in turn, transform theoretical patterns: M. Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981); *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Bloch analyzed how ritual practice constructs authority, ideology, and power: M. Bloch, *Ritual, History and Power: Selected Papers in Anthropology* (London: Athlone, 1989); *From Blessing to Violence: History and Ideology in the Circumcision Ritual of the Merina of Madagascar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Asad concentrates on the physical aspects of ritual practice in order to create a framework that acknowledges that cultural values exist only insofar as they are embodied in individuals' activities: Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). Catherine Bell proposes a more systematic treatment of ritual as practice. She does not define ritual itself but concentrates on characterizing "the production of ritualized acts," which she terms "ritualization." She makes the simple but important point that the production of ritual practices tends to structure and nuance an environment in a circular fashion — ritual acts produce certain patterns of thought, which are themselves influenced and bolstered by those very same ritual practices: C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 140. In direct relation to the construction of authority, Maurice Bloch concentrates on the circularity of ideologically informed ritual practices that make hierarchical structures of authority appear pre-existent and are often at variance with everyday patterns of behavior: Maurice Bloch, "Features of Articulation," *Archives européennes de sociologie* 15 (1974): 55–81. Jean-Francois Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) is a lucid and wide-ranging meditation on problems of cultural change and political efforts to reshape or fossilize cultural identity. Andrew Pickering challenges us to look at scientific practice itself (and by extension, the academic endeavor) as "a work of cultural extension," thus reciprocally affected by our objects and goals of study: *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 3.
 - 5 For a brief overview of where art historical and anthropological discourse on art, agency, and practice have overlapped and where they have remained discrete, see Jeremy Tanner and Robin Osborne, "Introduction: Art and Agency and Art History," in *Art's Agency and Art History*, ed. J. Tanner and R. Osborne (Malden, Mass., and Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 3–10.
 - 6 For a recent volume providing a multidisciplinary overview, see Sanjeev Khagram and Peggy Levitt, eds., *The Transnational Studies Reader: Intersections and Innovations* (New York: Routledge, 2008). For an introduction to contemporary study of globalization and institutions, see Justin Ervin and Zachery Taylor, *Globalization: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2008). Scholars in linguistics, psychology, sociology, and political science have also produced important bodies of literature on medical, occupational, and corporate communications issues of cross-cultural interaction, which are outside the scope of this study: see journals such as *Cross-Cultural Research* (London: Sage), *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Periodicals Consortium), *Journal of Intercultural Studies* (Melbourne: River Seine Publications).
 - 7 Foundational studies of world systems during and before European colonialism include Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Philip

- D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- 8 For an historiographical survey and critique of world-systems in anthropology, see Thomas D. Hall, "World-Systems and Evolution: An Appraisal," in *World-Systems Theory in Practice: Leadership, Production, and Exchange*, ed. P. Nick Kardulias (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 1–24. Influential essays in the development of the field are presented in Kajsia Ekholm Friedman and Jonathan Friedman, *Historical Transformations: The Anthropology of Global Systems* (Lanham, Md.: AltaMira Press, 2008).
- 9 Amir Arjomand and Edward A. Tiryakian, eds., *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis* (London and Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2004). See also the papers collected in *International Sociology* 16, no. 3 (2001); and Johann P. Arnason and Björn Wittrock, eds., *Eurasian Transformations, Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries: Crystallizations, Divergences, Renaissances* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004). For methodological overviews, see Jerry H. Bentley, "Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (1996): 763–62; idem, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (New York: Oxford, 1993); and K. N. Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Useful historiographical studies and introductions include Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jerry H. Bentley, *Shapes of World History in Twentieth-Century Scholarship* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 2003); and Stephen K. Sanderson, ed., *Civilizations and World Systems: Studying World-Historical Change* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 1995). Anthropological and archaeological perspectives are offered by Kardulias, *World-Systems Theory in Practice*; and Thomas Hall and Christopher Chase-Dunn, "The World-Systems Perspective and Archaeology: Forward into the Past," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 1, no. 2 (1993): 121–43. Recent efforts to evaluate "world art history" include David Carrier, *A World Art History and Its Objects* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008); and James Elkins, ed., *Is Art History Global?* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).
- 10 This is related to a parallel shift in interest in these disciplines, from finding stable or original cultures to studying how local communities respond to change, including global influences: see James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 9–17; and Douglas Kellner, "Theorizing Globalization," *Sociological Theory* 20, no. 3 (2002): 285–305. For a wide sampling of influential authors interested in both broad meditations on the processes of globalization as well as its impact on individual, local communities and cultures, see Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo, eds., *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); and Johann Páll Arnason, *Civilizations in Dispute: Historical Questions and Theoretical Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).
- 11 Inda and Rosaldo, *Anthropology of Globalization*, 6–7.
- 12 Recent examples in the history of religions are David Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with "Local Cults" in Tibet and the Himalayan Region* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008); Shuma Iwai, "The Perspective of Ebina Danjō's Japanized Christianity: A Historical Case Study," *Exchange* 38, no. 1 (2009): 21–33; Gilles Veinstein, ed., *Syncretismes et hérésies dans l'Orient seljoukide et ottoman (XIV^e–XVIII^e siècles): Actes du Colloque du Collège de France, octobre 2001* (Paris: Peeters, 2005); A. M. Leopold and J. S. Jensen, eds., *Syncretism and Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and Armando Lampe, "Repensar el sincretismo en el estudio de la religión popular en el Caribe," in Noemí Quezada, ed., *Religiosidad popular México Cuba* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 2004), 169–77. For recent use of this concept as an interpretive term in art history, see Yukako Suzawa, *The Genesis of Early Christian Art: Syncretic Juxtaposition in the Roman World* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008); Thomas Weber, "Sculptures from Southern Syrian Sanctuaries of the Roman Period," in *Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East*, ed. Yaron Z. Eliav, Elise A. Friedland, and Sharon Herbert (Leuven and Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2008), 363–96; and Sunil Gupta, *Early Sculptural Art in the Indian Coastlands: A Study in Cultural Transmission and Syncretism (300 BCE–CE 500)* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2008).
- 13 Bettina Schmidt, "The Creation of Afro-Caribbean Religions and their Incorporation of Christian Elements: A Critique Against Syncretism," *Transformation* 23, no. 4 (2006): 236–43; Charles Stewart, "Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture," *Diacritics*, 29, no. 3 (1999): 40–62; and

- Stephan Palmie, "Against Syncretism: 'Africanizing' and 'Cubanizing' Discourses in North American *Órísá* Worship," in *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. Richard Fardon (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 74–107. The papers in *Historical Reflections / Réflexions historiques* 27, no. 3 (2001) provide a wide-ranging overview, among them B. Lincoln, "Retiring Syncretism," 453–59.
- 14 For an important historiographical study, see B. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 47–75. Lincoln traces the development of the idea of an ancient "Aryan" *Urvolk*, and their *Urheimat*, *Urmythen*, *Ursprache*, and even *Urphysiologie* through the work of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1804), Sir William Jones (1746–94), Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm, Ludwig Feurbach (1804–72), Richard Wagner (1813–83), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) and a multitude of early twentieth-century authors, including legitimate scholars and Nazi theoreticians of race, like Hans F. K. Günther (1891–1968), or myth like Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946). See also Bernard Mees, *Science of the Swastika* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2008). Josef Strzygowski attempted to apply this line of reconstructive, comparative inquiry to art historical material, with sometimes bizarre results: C. Maranci, "Armenian Architecture as Aryan Architecture: The Role of Indo-European Scholarship in the Theories of Josef Strzygowski," *Visual Resources* 13 (1999): 361–78. Contemporary Indo-European studies have divested themselves of this problematic past and, although the overall goal is one of reconstruction, have fruitfully engaged many of these theoretical debates in order to understand cultural change leading away from the Indo-European; D. W. Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 21–38, 123–33.
 - 15 Foundational texts in the humanities and social sciences are Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pref. by Jean-Paul Sartre, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1966); and Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). Influential later theorists include Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Gayatri Spivak, *The Critique of Post-Colonial Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999). A useful overview is provided by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). For a sample of art historical perspectives, see Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 33–57; J. D. Herbert, "Passing between Art History and Post-Colonial Theory" (an overview within the context of other late twentieth-century theoretical efforts) in *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 213–29; Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones and Mary Roberts, eds. *Edges of Empire: Orientalism and Visual Culture* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005); Kobena Mercer, ed., *Exiles, Diasporas and Strangers* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008); and Anderson, *Crossing Cultures*.
 - 16 For example, see the reviews of Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) by Madelaine Adelman, Marianne Constable, and Inderpal Grewal collected in a special book review forum in *American Anthropologist* 110, no. 4 (2008): 511–22. See also Kajsa Ekholm Friedman and Jonathan Friedman, *Modernities, Class, and the Contradictions of Globalization: The Anthropology of Global Systems* (Lanham, Md.: AltaMira Press, 2008); Maria Starzmann, "Cultural Imperialism and Heritage Politics in the Event of Armed Conflict: Prospects for an 'Activist Archaeology,'" *Archaeologies* 4, no. 3 (2008): 368–89; B. Ziff and P. V. Rao, "Introduction to Cultural Appropriation," in *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*, ed. B. Ziff and Pratima V. Rao (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 8 and 16–20.
 - 17 K. R. Dark, "Globalizing Late Antiquity: Models, Metaphors and the Realities of Long-Distance Trade and Diplomacy," in Harris, *Incipient Globalization?*, 3–14.
 - 18 The Sogdians' trading network has been the best-studied of such systems: Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History*, trans. James Ward (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 35–37; Jonathan Karam Skaff, "The Sogdian Trade Diaspora in East Turkestan during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 46, no. 4 (2003): 475–524. See above for further bibliography on the Indian Ocean and Silk Road trade, and my article "Distant Displays of Power" in this volume.
 - 19 E. H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of Tang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 7–39; D. D. Leslie, "Persian Temples in Chang'an," *Monumenta Serica* 35

(1981–83): 275–303; and D. C. Twitchett, “The T’ang Market System,” *Asia Major*, n.s. 12, no. 2 (1966): 202–248.

- 20 Many of the major works of Bourdieu (*Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984) and Anthony Giddens (*The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge: Polity, 1984; *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*, London: Macmillan, 1979) concentrate on the reciprocal, mutually structuring nature of societal forms and human practice. Bourdieu studied the role of human taste, consumption, and display in this process. Daniel Miller has analyzed these problems with the emphasis more on objects than social forms (*Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987; *Material Cultures*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) and produced a recent meditation based on research in London, *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009). Both approaches are useful standpoints from which to analyze the highly structured environments of ancient court cultures, and the very important role of art objects, textiles, and buildings in articulating and reproducing those environments of power: see Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*; idem., *Distinction*; idem., *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). For Bourdieu’s engagement with Marx, see Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 96. For interesting applications of his ideas to visual and architectural material, see David Gartman, “Bourdieu’s Theory of Cultural Change: Explication, Application, Critique,” *Sociological Theory*

20, no. 2 (2002): 255–77; and Benjamin Dalton, “Creativity, Habit, and the Social Products of Creative Action: Revising Joas, Incorporating Bourdieu,” *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 4 (2004): 603–622.

- 21 A classic text on the concept of trade diasporas is Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also Karam Skaff, “The Sogdian Trade Diaspora.”
- 22 S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1–22; Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire According to the T’ang Dynastic Histories* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 10.
- 23 While not directly addressing visual culture, the work of Michel de Certeau is useful in dealing with the role of visual material in the techniques used by the powerless to establish an identity and place apart from what those in power offer them: M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); idem., *Culture in the Plural*, trans. T. Conley (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); idem., *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
- 24 Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China*. For the religion in Egypt and Africa, see Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 28, 30 and 35. Manichaeans were also integrated into Egyptian society and even distinguished themselves in the late antique Egyptian phenomenon of desert asceticism: Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East*, 94–96 and 99.
- 25 Although Christianity was not as dominant as Buddhism, a small Nestorian community existed in both the Uighur

steppe empire, the kingdom of Qočo, and the Tang capital. The Syrian Katholikos, Timotheus, informed his Bishop Sergios that he had sent a metropolitan to the land of the Turks and had also prepared to anoint one for the Land of the Tibetans. The Nestorians built a church in front of the walls of Qočo no later than 900 AD, and decorated it with frescos: Geza Uray, “Zu den Spuren des Nestorianismus und des Manichaismus im alten Tibet (8.–10. Jh.),” in *Synkretismus in den Religionen Zentralasiens*, ed. W. Heissig and H.-J. Klimkeit (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), 198; W. Hage, “Das Christentum in der Turfan-Oase,” in Heissig and Klimkeit, *Synkretismus in den Religionen Zentralasiens*, 46.

- 26 As embodied in its Parthian and Uighur writings, Manichaeism utilized Sanskrit-derived Buddhist terms to express its ideas, such as “buddha,” by which Mani, Jesus and Śākyamuni were referred to, or *parinirvāṇa*, used interchangeably with “crucifixion” to refer to Mani’s death: Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, “Buddhistische Übernahmen im iranischen und türkischen Manichaismus,” in Heissig and Klimkeit, *Synkretismus in den Religionen Zentralasiens*, 60–61.
- 27 Klimkeit, “Buddhistische Übernahmen im iranischen und türkischen Manichaismus,” 60.
- 28 Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, “Indian Motifs in Manichaean Art,” in Heuser and Klimkeit, *Synkretismus in den Religionen Zentralasiens*, 291–99. For an intensive study of Manichaean book art, see Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, *Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art: A Codicological Study of Iranian and Turkic Illuminated Book Fragments from 8th–11th Century East Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).
- 29 The Hellenistic age is indeed much more complex than a single paradigm of colonialism or syncretism: John Ma,

- "Paradigms and Paradoxes in the Hellenistic World," in *Studi Hellenistici XX*, ed. B. Virgilio (Pisa and Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2008), 371–86. For a critique of the concept of a "hybrid visual culture" see the article by Nassos Papalexandrou in this volume.
- 30 The best introduction to this time period and overview of the material is Errington and Cribb, *The Crossroads of Asia*.
- 31 Andrew Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 173–81.
- 32 Paul Bernard, "Le Marsyas d'Apamée, l'Oxus et le colonization séleucide en Bactriane," *Studia Iranica* 16, no. 1 (1987): 103–115; idem, "L'Asie centrale et l'empire séleucide," *Topoi orient-occident* 4, no. 1 (1994): 473–511. Gunvor Lindstrom, "Heiligtümer und Kulte im hellenistischen Baktrien und Babylonien - ein Vergleich," in *Alexander der Grosse und die Öffnung der Welt: Asiens Kulturen im Wandel*, ed. S. Hansen, A. Wiczorek and M. Tellenbach (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2009), 127–33.
- 33 F. L. Holt, *Thundering Zeus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 117–25.
- 34 See Holt's comments on the conflicting theses of Tarn and A. K. Narain; F. Holt, introduction to W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Chicago: Ares Books, 1985), iv–v.
- 35 Though bilingual, Menander's main silver coin types retain Greek iconography on obverse and reverse: a king with diadem, facing left with spear or facing right, diademed with helmet and chlamys on the obverse; and on the reverse "thundering Athena." For Menander's coinage, see Osmund Bopearachchi, *Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian Coins in the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1993), plates 28–30, and 77–88 for an overview of his coinage and synthesis of the literature. In contrast, Plutarch's mention of Menander (*Moralia* 45–120), and the division of his ashes into equal parts that were venerated within stupas by his cities, appears to provide the sequel to the Pali text *Milindapañha*, where the king speaks with the Buddhist monk Nāgasena as a future *dhārmārāja*.
- 36 M. Canepa, "The Problem of Indo-Scythian Art and Kingship: Evolving Images of Power and Royal Identity between the Iranian, Hellenistic and South Asian Worlds," in *Scythians, Sarmatians, Alans: Iranian-Speaking Nomads of the Eurasian Steppes*, ed. A. Alemani (Barcelona: Autonomous University of Barcelona Press, forthcoming); F. Sinisi, "L'eredità iconografica della monetazione ellenistica del Nord-Ouest del subcontinente indiano: un 'pantheon monetario' saka?" in *Transmarinae imagines: Studi sulla trasmissione di iconografie tra Mediterraneo ed Asia in età classica ed ellenistica*, ed. E. Acquaro and P. Callieri (La Spezia, Italy: Agorà edizioni, 2003), 165–202.
- 37 Antonio Invernizzi, "Introduzione all'arte dell'Asia ellenizzata," in *Sulla via di Alessandro: da Seleucia al Gandhara*, 63–71; Lolita Nehru, *Origins of the Gandhāran Style: A Study of Contributory Influences* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- 38 Important works exploring the problems and possibilities of this approach from art historical, anthropological, sociological, and archaeological perspectives include Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Marcia-Anne Dobres and John Robb, eds., *Agency in Archaeology* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Thomas, eds., *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Tanner and Osborne, *Art's Agency and Art History*; and Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris, eds., *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach* (New York: Springer, 2008).
- 39 Examples of productive studies from this point of view on discrete cultural traditions, both traditional and contemporary, include Christopher Pinney, "Piercing the Skin of the Idol," in Pinney and Thomas, *Beyond Aesthetics*, 157–79; Clare Harris, "The Politics and Personhood of Tibetan Buddhist Icons," in Pinney and Thomas, *Beyond Aesthetics*, 181–99; Diane Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Irene Winter, "The Eyes Have It: Votive Statuary, Gilgamesh's Ax and Cathected Viewing in the Ancient Near East," in *Vision and Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22–44; idem, "Opening the Eyes and Opening the Mouth: The Utility of Comparing Images in Worship in India and the Ancient Near East," in *Ethnography and Personhood: Notes from the Field*, ed. M. Meister (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2000), 129–62; idem, "Agency Marked, Agency Ascribed: The Affective Object in Ancient Mesopotamia," in Osborne and Tanner, *Art's Agency and Art History*, 42–69; Bissera Pencheva, "The Performative Icon," *Art Bulletin* 88, no. 4 (2006): 631–55; idem, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2009).
- 40 Sociological and anthropological studies have analyzed the impact and agency of objects themselves in negotiating or forming culture, both of which have a

direct bearing on the processes of exchange: Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*; idem, *Material Cultures*; Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Wim van Binsbergen, *Commodification: Things, Agency, and Identities (The Social Life of Things Revisited)* (Münster: LIT Verlag 2005); Nicole Boivin, *Material Cultures, Material Minds: The Impact of Things on Human Thought, Society, and Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

- 41 Providing an entry point to these complex problems, see Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2003); P. Brancaccio, "Close Encounters: Multicultural Systems in Ancient India," in *On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, ed. D. M. Srinivasan (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 386–97; C. A. Hope, "From Kellis to Begram: New Evidence for an Egyptian Origin of the Painted Glass in the Begram Hoard," in A. A. di Castro and C. A. Hope, *Cultural Interaction in Afghanistan c. 300 BCE to 300 CE* (Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, 2005), 19–31; A. Invernizzi, "The Culture of Parthian Nisa between Steppe and Empire," in *After Alexander: Central Asia before Islam*, 163–77; S. Mehendale, *Begram Ivory and Bone Carvings*, <http://ecai.org/begramweb>; idem, "Begram: New Perspectives on Ivory and Bone Carvings," (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1997); J. Cribb, "Money as a Marker of Cultural Continuity and Change of Central Asia," in *After Alexander: Central Asia before Islam*, 333–75. See above for interaction

among Western European, Byzantine, and Islamic cultures.

- 42 Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*, studies this phenomenon in detail. According to Allsen (71 and 79–81), Mongol investiture practices appropriated and integrated a wide variety of others, including those refined over centuries in Byzantium, Sasanian Iran, and the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates. See also Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, 138–40.
- 43 This specific use of *nasīj* is ubiquitous in the sources. *Jisūn* literally means "color"; in Mongolian it denoted "a robe of one color," as the *Yuan shih* (History of the Yuan Dynasty) defines it; Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*, 19; Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, 130–32.
- 44 Marco Polo, *The Travels*, trans. Ronald Latham (London: Penguin Books, 1958), 106.
- 45 Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, 71, 79–81, 130–31.
- 46 Ibid., 132, fig. 57.
- 47 Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*, 107–108.
- 48 Ala-ad-Dīn 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 186. Thomas Allsen has meticulously collected all the sources that relate to the *jisūn*. They are as diverse as Catholic monks' missionary reports, the writings of Marco Polo, and Persian and Chinese histories: Allsen *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*, 19–26. Rashid al-Dīn relates that when Ögödei retired to his palace at Karakorum "for a period of a month" to "devote himself to pleasure" all the courtiers present during the festivities would wear robes of one color: Rashid al-Dīn, *The Successors of Ghengis Khan*, trans. J. A. Boyle (New York: Columbia

University Press, 1971), 64. The Franciscan monks, Benedict the Pole and John of Plano Carpini, who attended Güyük's accession, relate that all 5,000 courtiers assembled for the occasion wore clothes of gilded silk (including the monks over their habits). Marco Polo's *Travels* contain the classic description of the use of the *jisūn* robe in his account of annual court ceremonies during the reign of Kublai Khan: Marco Polo, *The Travels*, 138 and 140–41. The court of Möngke retained all the traditions of the *jisūn*. Juvaini states that at his accession in 1251 those present wore a different colored robe every day they were in attendance, matching that of the emperor. The khan's robe, of course, was distinguished with more elaborate ornament: Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror*, 573. When Hülegü departed for Iran, Möngke held a great drinking party where again all the participants wore "robes of one color": "Hülegü prepared feasts to celebrate his leave-taking and betook himself to the ordu of the World-Emperor. Arigh Böke arrived from the opposite direction, and all the princes and relatives who were in that vicinity were gathered together like the Pleiades at the Court of Qara-Qorum. Each in turn gave a feast, and they cast the die of desire upon the board of revelry, draining goblets (*jamba*) and donning garments (*jamaha*) of one color, at the same time not neglecting important affairs": Juvaini, 610–11. The *Yuan shih* states that, "when there was a great feast in the palace then they wore (the *jisūn* robes) ... As for all the meritorious relatives, great ministers, and personal attendants, when (the emperor) bestowed (these garments) then they wore them. Down to the musicians and guards all had their garments." Trans. Allsen, *Commodity*

- and Exchange in the Mongol Empire, 25. Chief in William of Rubruck's description of the magnificence of the Mongol court is his account of Möngke Khan sitting in state bestowing robes of office to his courtiers: William of Rubruck, *The Mongol Mission*, trans. R. Dawson (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 175.
- 49 Motifs such as the dragon and phoenix appear in Islamic miniatures only in the first half of the fourteenth century, with the first convincing example coming from the Demotte *Šāhuāma*: D. Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements in Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period," in *Armenian Studies in Memoriam Haïg Berbérian*, ed. Dickran Kouymjian (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1986), 443; idem, "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth Century Armenia: Political and Cultural Exchange along the Silk Road," in Kaplony and Forêt, *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road*, 125.
- 50 Ani Bournoutian, "Cilician Armenia," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 1, ed. Richard Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 286; Nina Garsoïan, "Cilicia, Armenia," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1:463. During the Cilician period, major events in the history of the Armenian people played out in territories that were never part of the ancestral Armenian homeland and where they did not even constitute the majority of the population. However, in this kingdom the traditions of the Armenian Church, Armenian literature, and liturgical art developed to one their most refined apogees: Claude Mutaïan, "La place de l'Arménie cilicienne dans l'Arménologie," *Iran and the Caucasus* 10, no. 3 (2006): 7–16.
- 51 The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia was already quite adept at navigating between different powers. The historian Smbat's long list of those who attended the coronation of King Levon I (r. 1198–1219)—the Syrian Jacobite patriarch, the Greek Metropolitan of Tarsus, delegates from the Caliph, the nobility of Antioch as well as the Catholicos Grigor VI who crowned Levon, and the German emperor's representative Conrad, Archbishop of Mainz, who gave him the scepter—indicates the scope of the political and cultural network of which Cilicia found itself at the center: Paul Bedoukian, "The Single Lion Coronation Coins of Levon I," *Journal for the Society for Armenian Studies* 1 (1984), 99.
- 52 Robert Bedrosian, "Armenia During the Seljuk and Mongol Periods," in Hovannisian, *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, 262.
- 53 Throughout this period Het'um I and his successors paid regular visits to either the Grand Khan in Karakorum, or more frequently, to the Il-Khans. Despite nearly constant warfare, the period of Mongol suzerainty marked the apogee of Cilician Armenia's cosmopolitan court culture: N. Garsoïan, "Armenia, Cilicia," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 1:463.
- 54 Sirarpie Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), figs. 516 and 517; Kouymjian, "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth Century Armenia," 122 n. 14.
- 55 Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, 645; Kouymjian, "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth Century Armenia," 124.
- 56 Het'um I and his brother Smbat each made a journey to the Mongol court at Karakorum: Grigor of Akanc', "History of the Nation of Archers," ed. and trans. R. P. Blake and R. N. Frye, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12 (1949): 269–399. After performing this primary act of submission Het'um I and Levon II made many visits to the Il-Khans Hülegü (1256–65), Abaqa (1265–82), Arghun (1284–91), Baidu, and Ghazan (1295–1304) to request military assistance and reconfirm their investiture as kings of Cilicia upon the elevation of a new khan. Kirakos of Ganjak, the most reliable historian of this era, provides the details of Het'um I's journey: "The Journey of King Het'um," trans. J. A. Boyle, in *The Mongol World Empire 1206–1370* (Ashgate: Variorum Reprints, 1977), 181. Before July 1269, Levon II journeyed to the Il-Khanid court of Abaga to seek approval for his elevation to the Cilician throne. Smbat the Constable relates that Abaga received Levon well and sent him back to Cilicia with numerous presents: *La Chronique Attribuee au Connétable Smbat*, trans. G. Dédéyan (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1980), 123. Levon paid another visit to Abaga in 1272 to seek military assistance and to Arghun Khan upon his succession; Smbat the Constable, *La Chronique*, 124.
- 57 Akbarnia, "*Khita'i*: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom"; A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Shah-Name, la gnose soufie et le pouvoir mongol," *Journal Asiatique* 272 (1984): 249–337; idem, "Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin," *Studia Iranica* 17 (1988): 7–46; idem, "Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin: II-Takht-e Soleyman et la symbolique du Shah-Name," *Studia Iranica* 20 (1991): 33–148, plates I–XVI.
- 58 Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Shah-Name, la gnose soufie et le pouvoir mongol"; and "Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin." See also Yolande Crowe, "Late Thirteenth-

- Century Persian Tilework and Chinese Textiles," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 5 (1991): 154; R. Naumann and E. Naumann, *Takht-i Suleiman: Ausgrabung des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Iran* (Munich: Prähistorische Staatssammlung, 1976); Akbarnia "Khita'i: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom."
- 59 The most accessible introduction to the site's pre-Islamic architecture and archaeology, written by its excavator, is Dietrich Huff, "Takht-e Solaymān," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, www.iranica.com. On its Mongol phase, see Tomoko Masuya, "The Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaiman" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, Graduate School of Arts and Science, Institute of Fine Arts, 1997).
- 60 Known as Takht-e Solaymān only after the Timurid invasion, the site hosted the sanctuary of the sacred fire ādur Gušnasp, which was particularly revered by the Sasanian kings of kings. Although it had been installed at the site only in Sasanian times, it was associated with the activities of a long line of ancient Iranian heroes: Yašt 5.49–50, 9.17–23, 17.37–49; *Bundahishn*, 18.12; *Mēnōg īxrad* 27.59–63; *Takht-e Sīstān*, 35–36; Mary Boyce, "ādur Gušnasp," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1983) 1: 475–76; Islamic sources collected in Manijeh Abka'i-Khavari, *Das Bild des Königs in der Sasanidenzeit, Texte und Studien zur Orientalik* 13 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2000), 233–34.
- 61 Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Shah-Name, la gnose soufie et le pouvoir mongol"; and "Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin." Akbarnia introduced the Persian adjective for "Chinese" (*kitā'i*) to refer to these visual elements: as it was used at least by the Timurid and Safavid era to refer to these images, it provides a superior term to "chinoiserie": Akbarnia, "Khita'i: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom," 9–11.
- 62 Eleanor Sims, "The 'Iconography' of the Internal Decoration in the Mausoleum of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya," in *Content and Context of the Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla Soucek (University Park and London: published for the College Art Association by Penn State University Press, 1988), 141–55.
- 63 Akbarnia "Khita'i: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom." For perspective on the emergence of the illustrated *Book of Kings* in this period, see Robert Hillenbrand, *Shahnama: The Visual Language of the Persian Book of Kings* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- 64 These dragons evoke, yet do not copy outright, the Chinese *makara* and *long* dragons. For example, see Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. no. 43.658; Grabar and Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History*, 154–55; Eleanor Sims with Boris Marshak and Ernst Grube, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 261–62, fig. 178; 308, fig. 229; 310, fig. 231, 297, fig. 216, 308, fig. 229, 310, fig. 231; *Simorgh*: 165–66, fig. 80. The *simorgh* (New Persian *simorgh* > Middle Persian *sēnmurw* Avestan *mərəyō saēnō*) has a deep significance in Iranian culture as a bringer of health and fertility and savior of heroes; Hanns-Peter Schmidt, "Simorgh," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2002), www.iranica.com.
- 65 Linda Komaroff, "The Transmission and Dissemination of a New Visual Language," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 184–94; Yuka Kadoi, "Cloud Patterns: The Exchange of Ideas between China and Iran under the Mongols," *Oriental Art* 48, no. 2 (2002): 25–36; Akbarnia, "Khita'i: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom," 160–67; Grabar and Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History*, 42–43.
- 66 Akbarnia, "Khita'i: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom," 9–15, 160–89. For examples of this phenomenon in the context of the workshop, see Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.: LA County Museum / Sackler Gallery, 1989), 159–237.
- 67 I thank the second anonymous reader for this suggestion.

ARE THERE HYBRID VISUAL CULTURES?

Reflections on the Orientalizing Phenomena in the Mediterranean of the Early First Millennium BCE

Abstract

The last few decades have witnessed a major paradigmatic shift in the consideration of cross-cultural interaction in the Mediterranean during the early first millennium BCE. Cultural phenomena, such as the Orientalizing of the Greeks and Etruscans, have moved away from traditional polarizing models of “givers” and “takers” in favor of more variegated contexts of exchange or interaction. Building on these insights, this article argues that scholarship has been slow to address two major dimensions of visual culture. The first has to do with the lack of proper understanding of vision as a culturally conditioned category of experience. Figurative objects, for example, are usually considered as reified entities that are capable of eliciting identical behavioral responses when they cross cultural boundaries. Against this prevailing assumption, this article explores responses to the visual as learned practices that were also “exchanged” along with the objects they accompanied. The second dimension is concerned with considering, on theoretical and empirical grounds, the existence of hybridic visualities in contexts of cross-cultural interaction. What happens when objects induce the meeting or clash of divergent technologies of the visual? Under what circumstances are objects capable of shaping responses or naturalizing themselves as active agents in foreign contexts? What mechanisms control the generation of novel strategies of visual decoding, and how do these relate to their cognitive and social frameworks? In response to these questions, I propose that anthropologically informed archaeologies of vision have much to offer in the study of cross-cultural interaction in the ancient world.

IN THE LAST TWO DECADES numerous studies have focused on the social function of Early Greek art (here defined as Geometric through Archaic).¹ However, the field has been slow to shed light on Early Greek visuality—the prevalent mode, that is, of seeing and being seen in specific contexts. This is partly the result of modern mythopoesis: it is commonly assumed that the art of the eighth and seventh centuries BCE ushered in ways of seeing, understanding, and responding to visual documents that are still with us today. Moreover, there is a predominant tendency to presume that the ways people look at things today, physically or cognitively, have always been universally constant. After all, humans have always had eyes and have always been physiologically conditioned to use their vision to communicate with the world around them. In this study my working hypothesis is radically different: far from being a universal constant, vision is (and always has been) culturally conditioned.² This holds true regarding both the aspect of vision as a physiological function and its role as learned behavior. Actu-

ally, physiology and learned behavior are interdependent, if learning is indeed the habitual (conscious or unconscious) rewiring of the brain to process outside stimuli.³ Relativizing vision in these specific terms also entails acknowledging the diachronic existence and coexistence of multiple visual cultures. What happens when people who belong in divergent visual cultures contact each other? To what extent are their learned behaviors of vision affected by cross-cultural interaction? Is it possible to conceive, albeit theoretically, a notion of culturally “hybrid” or “mixed” visualities?

This paper is an exploration of the emerging attitudes to the visual domain during the intensification of cultural contacts between Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴ My intention is not so much to offer answers or explanations regarding artifacts or phenomena as to formulate certain research questions, parameters, and problems. I begin by laying out the working definition of “visuality” in this study. On the basis of an understanding that visuality is culturally conditioned, my second step is to delineate, albeit with a very loose brush, an understanding of vision in the context of Early Greek orality. Against this background, in the last section of this paper I examine how vision and visuality were transformed in the framework of the cross-cultural interaction we now study under the rubric of “Orientalizing.” Alongside the consideration of visuality in contexts of primary orality, hybridity may be a fruitful notion for reconstructing the complex attitudes toward the Orientalizing phenomenon and its visual documents.

Visuality

My understanding of “visuality” encompasses the culturally conditioned modes of seeing, or being seen, as active practices, which are regulated, on the one hand, by social norms, and, on the other, by the status and availability of the visual domain in a certain cultural environment.⁵ Both practices of seeing and the status of the visual are interdependent and they cannot be examined in relationships of cause and effect. They are two facets of the same coin continuously shaping each other in the actuality of social life.

The active practices of seeing should be understood as learned behaviors of response, such as the viewing subjects’ modes of looking (scanning, attentive gazing, etc.), their proximity to the objects of vision (proxemics), strategies of decode-ment, attendant bodily gestures or movement (kinesics), and oral or other physical or mental responses. A good example of this is the reaction of audiences, intended and unintended, to the synaesthetic effect of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*. The ebullient figurativeness of this overwhelmingly historiated artwork (see *Iliad*, book 18, ll. 558–709) causes fear and trepidation when Thetis makes it manifest in the world of the mortals:

... the goddess laid the armor down at Achilles' feet
 and the gear clashed out in all its blazoned glory.
 A tremor ran through all the Myrmidon ranks — none dared
 to look straight at the glare, each fighter shrank away.
 Not Achilles. The more he gazed, the deeper his anger went,
 his eyes flashing under his eyelids, fierce as fire —
 exulting, holding the god's shining gifts in his hands.
 And once he'd thrilled his heart with looking hard
 at the armor's well-wrought beauty,
 he turned to his mother, winged words flying ...
 (Homer, *Iliad*, book 19, ll. 15–27)⁶

Notwithstanding the enhancing effect of epic rhetoric, this important example is indicative of a multiplicity of attitudes toward the prototypical figurative work in the Greek epic, associating a range of sentiments with the effect of a visual work. On the one hand, we see the Myrmidons averting their gaze with trepidation because of the aural and visual power of the shield; on the other hand, Achilles is modeled as an ideal viewer whose gaze shines with the intensity of *selas* as he experiences an uncanny mixture of intense aesthetic delight and *cholos*. It is important to stress the synergy of other senses here: Achilles' *cholos* references his anger but the very same word evokes the bitter taste of *cholos* (gall). Likewise the action of vision has a tactile component: Achilles looks while he explicitly handles (*en cheiressin*) the divine artifacts. Conversely, the Myrmidons turn away, instinctively distancing themselves under the force of the shield's radiance and monstrous appearance.

This multitudinous response to the epic shield is also of interest because it highlights the active efficacy of the artwork itself. Anthropologist Alfred Gell has emphasized that artifacts (works of art, visually endowed objects) exercise their own active agency not only toward viewers but throughout their surrounding environments.⁷ That is, they shape their perceptual environments no less than the responses they make possible by means of their agency.

Consequently, a history of early Mediterranean vision and visibility encompasses the mutual relationships between men and objects. If we are to search for hybridity, we have to think of heterogeneous men/viewers interacting with objects/agents that dictate their own terms of viewing even as they negotiate their passage from one visuality to another.⁸

The status of the visual, on the other hand, pertains to the varying degrees visual or technically virtuosic objects are experienced in everyday life or in special, ritualized circumstances. In our visually oversaturated world we tend to forget that in antique or non-western cultures the experience of "art" has almost always been rare



1
Dipylon goddess, ca. 740 BCE. Ivory, height 24 cm. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, 776. Photograph courtesy DAI Athens

and reserved for very special occasions in the lifetime continuum. I would argue that both art historians and the public have been victims of what I would like to term — for heuristic purposes — the “cognitive fallacy” of the related scholarly disciplines: our scholarly practices favor the construction of false perceptions regarding ancient visualities. The accumulation of visual objects between the two covers of publications systematically ignores actual experiences or the contexts, intensity, and frequency of seeing and being seen. The same might be argued for museum displays.⁹ We marvel, for example, at the revolutionary reintroduction of figurative narratives in Athenian vase-painting of the middle of the eighth century BCE. However, we forget that they had to do with death and its experience in the idiosyncratic circumstances of the funeral or the cemetery and the realm of the dead. What kind of viewing attitude was entailed in these or other special circumstances? Who looked at these artworks and how, and for how long, and when, and in what contexts? What types of viewing attitudes were dictated by artworks like these?

Vision in Orality?

My exploration of Early Greek visuality is part of a larger project that explores vision, its subjects, and its objects in preliterate societies. The primary oral culture of Greece is a good case study for this endeavor for several reasons. First, regarding the period before 770 BCE, there are the challenges involved in understanding the nature of viewers’ responses, physical as well as cognitive and emotional, to the predominantly non-figurative visual idiom of Geometric art.¹⁰ We have a fairly detailed understanding of what Walter Ong termed “psychodynamics of orality,” the cognitive mechanisms (learning, memory, categorizing, recognizing, etc.) at work in contexts of primary orality — that is, contexts in which the totality of the population is non-literate.¹¹ What is lacking, however, is a theory of vision in orality, that is, a prescriptive account of how and to what extent oral subjects develop special mechanisms of response to the products of their ambient visual culture.¹² In other words, how does orality condition how humans see, understand, and respond to what we now classify as “art” in ways different than those of literate subjects?

Ong, for example, briefly hinted that non-literate subjects learn to respond to the visual in specific ways but he did not pursue it further, mainly because he did not consider “art” as an intermediary code between the two poles of orality and literacy.¹³ As a means of communication “art” may fluctuate freely in the spectrum between these two poles and its nature depends on the specific roles and functions it performs within particular social contexts. For example, in the period we are concerned with the Greeks favored functional objects (*daidala*) that were intricately crafted in exotic and expensive materials with rare and enchanting qualities such

as metallic shine and complex non-figural decoration.¹⁴ These objects were otherworldly and extremely valuable, and their fame, enshrined in oral poetry as it was, was programmed to circulate far and wide along with the fame of their distinguished owners. It would not be excessive to state that “art objects” were meant as much to be seen in special contexts and on specific occasions as to circulate widely in the elaborate oral media of the time (e.g., epic). As the Homeric *ekphrasis* of the shield of Achilles shows, the performativity of the artwork was a quality inherent to its nature, social life, and reception. And it is necessary to clarify here that by “performativity” we should understand not only the primal function of the artwork to stimulate performance but also its inherent capacity to fulfill its role only in the context of performative, i.e., ritual circumstances. Outside these circumstances the *daidalon* can not exist as an object of vision, it can not be seen.

Defining vision in these specific terms — i.e., vision of the artwork (*daidalon*) is active only in performative contexts (in other words, only participants in the performance or special ritual event can see) — entails the further consideration that vision as sensory cognitive action can not have functioned alone. Seeing the artwork in the circumstances described above means that the action of vision is part of a complex and inextricable continuum with the action of the other senses. In other words, “seeing” and “being seen” is a multisensory phenomenon, whereupon “seeing” is also “hearing,” and “touching,” and “smelling,” and “tasting.”¹⁵ This multisensoriality should not be understood in terms of synchronicity of functions: seeing is not seeing while also hearing and/or touching, smelling, etc. We may understand instead that seeing is also hearing and/or touching, smelling, and vice versa. This is so in view of the nature of the actual artworks that we today classify as “art”: they were not only meant to be looked at as extraordinary objects, as, for example, two-dimensional paintings hanging on the wall of an art museum today. They were interactive participants in special events during which the total emotional arousal of viewers functioned as the main catalyst of perception.

With the above considerations in mind, we can now focus more precisely on our attempt to reconstruct the experience of vision and its objects in Early Greece. Of paramount importance is to assess the implications of the predominantly non-figurative idiom of the visual arts from the collapse of Mycenaean civilization to about 770 BCE. First, it is important to stress that the ubiquitous obsessive preoccupation with intricate geometric motifs was not the result of the ignorance, ineptitude, or narrow intellectual horizons of makers and viewers. Alternate modes such as figuration were well known but carefully avoided or reserved for extraordinary circumstances and imbued with the status of a “marked” language.¹⁶ However this may be, it is worth asking precisely what cognitive, emotional, or behavioral demands this state of non-figuration makes on viewers in the specific performa-

tive circumstances described above. Alfred Gell has pointed out that in many visual cultures the intricacy of geometrical patterns often functions as a “buffer” zone that blocks passage to arcane knowledge by stupefying the mind. It is, therefore, not accidental that intricate designs, like mazes, are often found in liminal spaces that control traffic or communication, for example, from life to death and vice versa, or from the realm of the mortals to that of the divine and vice versa.¹⁷

Perhaps something of this experience is preserved in the formulaic expression *thauma idesthai* (“a wonder to behold”). This epic phrase epitomizes an aesthetic of wondrous experiences and often accompanies the description of magnificent, otherworldly artifacts, such as the automatic tripods of Hephaistos or Aphrodite’s shiny garments in the *Iliad*. To look attentively at *daidala* is tantamount to wonder, that is, you stop dead in your tracks and you surrender all your senses to a protracted, stupefying experience of the extraordinary.¹⁸

To recapitulate, seeing art (*daidala*) in the primary oral contexts of Early Greece was conditioned by the performative circumstances of the visual encounter. In all its inflections (physical, emotional, cognitive, etc.), vision was inextricably woven with other sensory experiences and it may even be that seeing art was primarily a synaesthetic phenomenon. The predominant visual idiom of the time, the Geometric style of pottery and bronzes, was partly an attention-focusing device but also created special cognitive demands on its viewers as an object of vision.

There are many aspects of Early Greek visibility about which we can only speculate: for example, specifying the nature of visual experience in terms of the parameters delineated above (e.g., kinesics, proxemics, temporality) and its role as cognitive storage device in the context of primary orality. Moreover, we do not know how far or how intensely this visual culture trickled down from the exclusive echelons of the ruling elites of the time. James Whitley, for example, has proposed that in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE special materials, artifacts, styles, and motifs were socially rationed, that is, their usage was strictly controlled and restricted within an exclusive circle of aristocratic families.¹⁹ It is, therefore, also worth reckoning with multiple “sub-groups” within the over-arching umbrella of Early Greek visibility. I would momentarily define these “sub-groups” as comprising those who adhered to prescribed modes of viewing according to distinctions such as social class or group, gender, age grade, geographic location, etc. This distinction is important given that those who partook in the cross-cultural phenomena of the Orientalizing were not culturally or socially homogeneous.

At this point, it is also imperative to stress the need to relativize analytical frameworks that capitalize on rigid binary oppositions. To begin with, there was no amorphous “East” that met a “Western” undifferentiated Greek world. As Near Eastern art historian Ann Gunter has emphasized, the Near East comprised a multiplicity



2

2
Detail of griffin protome from
Olympia, originally a cauldron
attachment, ca. 660 BCE. Bronze,
height 57 cm. Olympia Museum,
Br. 3177. Photograph by the author

of regional cultures over a vast area that resisted homogenization even under the domination of empires like the Assyrian.²⁰ We have to reckon with sociopolitical circumstances that engendered and maintained transcultural expressive languages (e.g., Phoenician products ending up as tribute in Assyrian palaces). It is, therefore, important to conceive of foreigners as belonging to multiple or hybrid visualities and not to an amorphous, fictional profile. It is difficult, however, to specify the cross overs and intermingling of these visual regimes in terms of horizontal and vertical registers of interaction. There must have been, for example, a vast difference between the attitudes of those who partook of the ample visibility of Assyrian palaces and those skillful craftsmen, Phoenician or others, who crafted luxury items, such as the well-known Cypro-Phoenician bowls, for those palaces and the international elites of the period. Moreover, it is debatable whether craftsmen of luxury objects shared the same codes of response as their consumers.

Now if we turn our attention to the Greek world, we encounter a similar situation. This is the case, provided that we take into account factors such as the difference in geographical scale and the uniformity of language, religion, and memory. Despite this uniformity, there are vast differences separating, for example, the visual cultures of Cyprus or Crete from those of Athens and Euboea. In view of this variegated situation, it only makes sense that our inquiries have to focus on specifying the nature of cross-cultural interaction in specific, well-circumscribed contexts, such as sanctuaries and the interstitial points of encounter such as ports-of-trade, harbors, etc. In other words, we have to abandon disciplinary or heuristic classifications and think in terms of groups, spaces, and dynamics akin to the realities of the period we are concerned with.

These contexts had their own dynamic of controlling the visibility, accessibility, and interactive character of visual culture. We should also think of them as

crucibles for the negotiation of old and new ways. I cannot emphasize enough the formative role of the sanctuaries in the generation of the new hybrid visualities, especially in view of the gradual transformations in art and society from the eighth century BCE. In the latter part of this paper I draw attention to certain phenomena that are explicable only in sanctuary contexts of encounters, negotiation, and circulation of diverse people and practices.

Considering Visuality(-ies) in the Context of Cultural Interaction

In the previous section I outlined a culturally distinct visuality, a state of seeing and being seen that despite its numerous local inflections seems to have been coherent and circumscribed in terms of style, media, and its inherent communicational mechanisms. This distinctiveness is apparent in the impressively variegated vocabulary of vision in Homeric epic, the traditional nature of which was forged in the performative practices of Greek society during the early centuries of the first millennium BCE.²¹ Even if we admit that the language of epic is a specially crafted poetic medium, still the nuance and variety it exhibits in the domain of vision largely reflects the spoken language of the early first millennium BCE.

This distinctiveness appears even more interesting in view of the recent understanding of the Early Greek world as an integral component of a wider Eastern Mediterranean network of cultures and people. Historians and archaeologists have been instrumental in delineating trade patterns and the back-and-forth movement of objects and people between the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean from the Late Bronze Age onwards. There is now a consensus that the Orientalizing was a constant determinant of cultural developments from the Bronze Age to the dawn of the Classical period.²² However, when it comes to the domain of visual culture, we have to be cautious in assessing, for example, the transformative effect of imports from Cyprus or the Near East: they would have been viewed (in the sense proposed in the previous section) by means of decoding strategies that were endemic at the receiving end. However intricate or sophisticated, that is, imports would have been “naturalized” into the receiving system of the Greek world. To use a metaphor from the realm of computers, the exotica from alien worlds would have been accessed or utilized with the existing indigenous “software” at hand. This would have been the case unless their importation and usage also involved mechanisms of importation, “translation” and/or “adaptation” of the non-indigenous “software.” Theoretically, at least, in the latter case we have to presume various models of interaction. For example, foreign visitors, such as traders, would have been the agents of such importations, although in reality things would have been much more complicated than we dare imagine. An alternative model involves Greeks acculturating themselves as visitors or immigrants in non-Greek cultures and then returning home

with their gained knowledge of objects and their attendant ways of seeing and being seen. Moreover, other phenomena, such as intermarriage, are often invoked to explain alterity or the introduction of new cultural ideas and practices. These models, however, do not allow for the development of the necessary processes for the institutionalization of foreign elements within the established operative frameworks of Greek visibility.²³

A more secure ground for investigation offers itself in areas of documented coexistence of native and non-native populations. The case has been made in several areas of the Greek world, most visibly in Cyprus, Crete, Rhodes, in the Greek colonial establishments of western Asia Minor, Magna Graecia, and Sicily. The extraordinary finds at Kommos in southern Crete and a plethora of artifactual evidence on the same island point to the presence and active agency of “immigrants” from the Near East. For example, the technical and stylistic traits of the Idaian Cave shields (see below) point to connections with north Syria whereas an idiosyncratic tri-pillar shrine at Kommos is replete with unmistakable Phoenician characteristics.²⁴ All the available evidence is not quantifiable and there is no algorithm to render it so. Consequently, our efforts to specify the nature of the agents or “importers” of the non-native ways of seeing and being seen are limited. However this may be, it is worth asking the following questions:

- a. Were the non-natives fully participant in the cultures of seeing and being seen in their original homelands in the Near East? For example, how conscious were the makers of the Assyrianizing bronze tympanum from the Idaian Cave that its style and motifs had a culturally distinct referentiality? Or are we to suppose that a certain degree of “reification” of styles and motifs is involved in cross-cultural transference?
- b. To what extent is visibility a static condition within a culture? Under what circumstances do people change their ways of seeing and being seen? What types of contact or interaction induce dramatic transformations in the prevalent visual cultures of clearly definable groups? Is the agency of objects sufficient to induce changes in attitude and outlook or is change introduced and controlled by those who wield power in society?
- c. To what extent was there overlap between the modes of viewing of the Greek world and those of the Eastern Mediterranean spectrum? I proposed above the interdependence of visibility and orality in the Greek world of the early first millennium BCE. In view of this, it is worth asking whether the same interdependence was a determinant factor in the Eastern Mediterranean, where writing never totally fell out of use.



3

3
Mantiklos "Apollo", ca. 700–675 BC.
Bronze, height 20.3 cm. Museum
of Fine Arts, Boston, 03.997.
Francis Bartlett Donation of 1900.
Photograph © 2003 Museum of
Fine Arts

Hybridity and Visuality

Defining hybridity in the ancient Mediterranean is much more difficult than simply identifying foreignness in material culture.²⁵ The very notion of hybridity has been predicated on the prior existence of cultural "purity," which is in-and-of itself a problematic notion given what we know now regarding the transformative nature of diachronic interactions between cultures all around the Mediterranean. In contemporary cultural theory the term "hybridity" and the realities it references are laden with its connotations from postcolonial studies, where "... it is used to describe the newly composed, mixed or contradictory identities resulting from immigration, exile and migrancy...."²⁶ The critiques of postcolonial analysis are premised on the existence of social inequalities generated by the power differential between colonizers and colonized since the onset of the Early Modern period. Until very recently in Classical archaeology a similar binary opposition — generated by the same structural logic of opposition between the familiar "us" and the inscrutable "other" — provided the operative premise for highlighting other presumed polarities at work during cultural contact: colonizers were seen as active agents whereas the colonized were understood as recessive or passive receivers; the former were celebrated as bearers of a higher culture that uncontrollably swept over the backward ways of local populations.

The historical framework of the cross-cultural encounters considered under the rubric of Mediterranean Orientalizing points to a different gamut of phenomena in terms of the intensity, frequency, nature, and efficacy of contacts between foreign visitors, settlers, and indigenous populations. Recent theoretical thinking and a more nuanced interpretation of archaeological evidence and phenomena point to contexts, relationships, encounters, and overt or implicit interactions in frameworks that allow for ambivalence, complexity of roles, or interchange in the dominant currents or flow of energy.²⁷ More importantly, as we have already seen, in addition to human agents as the chief protagonists in cross-cultural encounters, a catalytic role in the process of acculturation is attributed to the efficacy of material or even non-material culture to affect change in all those involved in contact situations.

As a result of these developments, the moment is opportune to switch the emphasis to the product of contact, that is, the fusion of ideas, modes, and practices “which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original patterns or both.”²⁸ In the remainder of this paper, I propose that certain phenomena in the realm of visual culture make sense if we presume that a mixed visual code was one of the essential dimensions of cross-cultural encounters, contact, and exchange of information regarding means of visual communication. This mixed code signals a hybrid visuality that was part and parcel of overarching phenomena of hybridity that still await elucidation.

The working definition of “hybrid visuality” proposed here envisages a mode of seeing and being seen whose practices of vision, cognition, and response defy, subvert, and supplant the cultural specificity of its constituent parts. It is a “middle ground” of some sort, created consciously or subconsciously, in contexts where vision and its objects matter not only as a means of communication but also as constituents of new collective and individual subjectivities. The negotiation of these subjectivities is in itself conditioned by the social function of the objects of vision and the degree to which they are allowed to continuously shape perception. Moreover, I emphasize that hybrid visualities, as conceived here, do not necessarily entail mixed styles and types of material culture. It is not simply a matter of “hyphenated” definitions (e.g., Cypro-Phoenician, to use a current one). Rather it stresses precisely how people relate to objects and vice versa under conditions in which meanings are generated by the collusion of mental attitudes and the agency of the objects themselves. The point of this collusion is the “middle space” of visual hybridity, that is, the practical and conceptual space in which people modify their ways in order to constitute new relational modes.

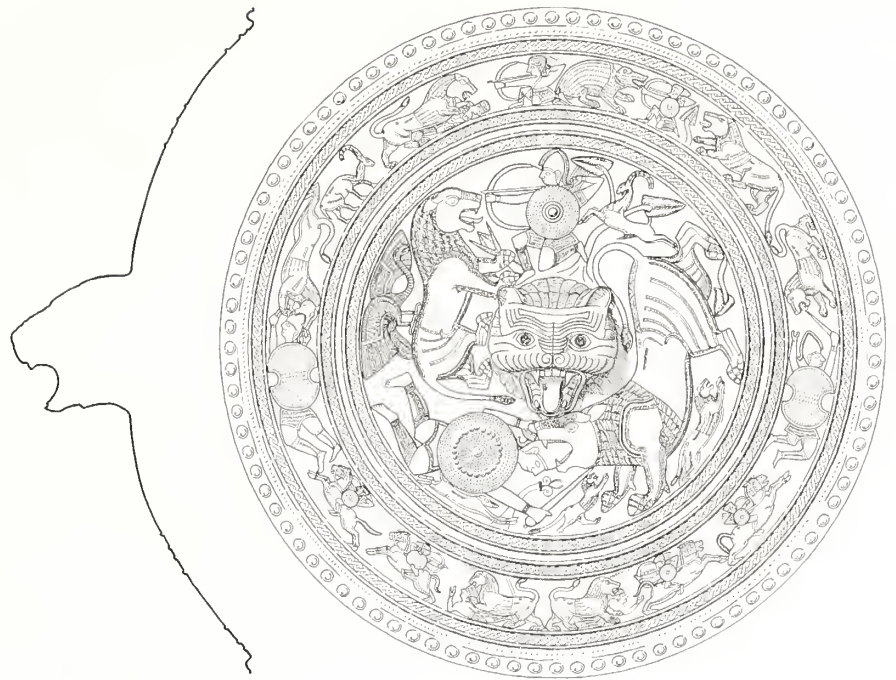
On the basis of this definition, in the last two sections, I attempt to detect phenomena of hybrid visualities in the visual arts of the eighth and seventh centuries

BCE. One has to do with the very organ of vision as a new expressive medium generated in the confluence not so much of artistic traits or ideas as of religious attitudes of Greeks and non-Greeks. The other has to do with the Idaian Cave shields: their artistic mix of various elements, I argue, makes more sense if we presume them as both sources and products of cultural hybridity.

Figures See: Emphasis on Eye Is Emphasis on Vision

My point of departure will be the radically new emphasis on the very organ of vision from the second half of the eighth century BCE onwards. To repeat the old descriptive trope, it is as if all of a sudden likenesses of humans and animals opened their eyes to the world and started looking attentively, if not aggressively, at their surroundings. This is manifest both in grave assemblages and in the realm of the sanctuaries, as the illustrated examples make clear (Figs. 1, 2). These phenomena have been explained as symptomatic of the formal surrender of the abstract art of Geometric Greece to naturalistic influences from the Near East. This interpretive line, however, turns out to be narrow in scope, if we consider the pragmatic functions of these visual objects, that is, their interactive character in the actuality of ritual practice. They look at you so that you, divine or mortal, look back at them only to get emotionally and cognitively enchanted by them. As Irene Winter has recently shown, these functions are exemplary of a millennia-old tradition of mutual communication between figures and their divine or mortal onlookers in various regions of the Near East.²⁹ In view of this cultic pedigree, the appearance of the same practice in the Greek world cannot be the result only of artistic influence — artists or patrons making choices out of a new pool of novel or exotic models. An entire system of seeing and being seen must have infused the Greek world and the critical question is no longer whether foreigners or their products are to account for this new visibility. Rather, we should ask, what kind of interactions, exchanges, negotiations, and strategies were at work when divergent visualities converged or met each other? The mixed traits of the Orientalizing here belong to a more complicated order of experience, one that neither belongs solely to the realm of artistic interaction nor is the product of casual contact between artists or artists and patrons. We are confronted here with material symptoms of syncretic encounters in religious contexts — that is, contexts that facilitate the consensual surrender of perceived differences to the acknowledgment of a common humanity.

A textbook case is provided by the Mantiklos statuette in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Fig. 3).³⁰ Its type and iconography place it in the old Geometric tradition of the warrior statuettes of the ninth and eighth centuries BCE. In formal terms, however, this figure has abandoned the iconic, hieroglyphic (formulaic)



4

4
Line drawing of an Idaeon Cave shield (the so-called "hunt" shield). Diameter: 83 cm. After Kunze, *Kretische Bronzereliefs*, Beilage I. Original in Herakleion Museum, Crete, 7

function of the old type: no longer is it a visual formula that corresponds to a prestigious formula in heroic poetry.³¹ Instead this bronze invites a dialogic and analytical attitude. Its form is descriptive and constitutive of a represented subject (not a notion), an effect underscored and enhanced by the penetrating eyes of the figure.³² (The now lost eyes were of glass or stone or some kind of precious material, such as ivory.) Even more importantly, it carries an inscription that renders the figure a dialogic medium, an Other with a voice and life of its own.³³ This mixture of elements points to an artwork conceived with radically new functions in mind and my point is that these functions were learnt in contexts of dynamic cross-fertilization — what I defined above as "hybridic visibility." This example is one of many that cannot be explained in terms of artistic interaction, influence, or borrowing. It is rather the result of the forging of new attitudes, perhaps in a context of cooperative coexistence of natives and non-natives. That this forging involved negotiation, exchange, and multiple experiments is a hypothesis waiting to be tested against other specimens of material culture.

Monsters and Vision

Similar considerations are in order regarding the visual arts of Crete, an island with plenty of evidence for mixed populations and intensive intercultural contact from the tenth to the seventh centuries BCE. Here the most striking example of iconographic, stylistic, and technical hybridity is provided by the famous votive shields from the Idaeon Cave, Zeus' famous birthplace, on Mount Ida (Fig. 4).³⁴ Scholars have been able to detect Near Eastern iconographic and stylistic elements (Assyrian, Urartaic, Syro-Phoenician, Egyptian) in these bronze *sphyrrelata*, whereas elements of content, syntax, and decoration have been recognized as Greek (e.g., paratactic composition, Dipylon-type shields, lack of coherent scale).³⁵ What state of visibility does this hybridity point to?

At this point, it is important to stress the unprecedented emphasis on the visual as special religious experience that these objects demonstrate. As extraordinary objects of a cult the shields were meant to be radically and shockingly novel for local and non-local populations. In this context the concept of “intentional hybrids” may be useful. As Pnina Werbner put it, intentional hybrids “shock, change, challenge, revitalize or disrupt through deliberate, intended fusions” and in so doing they “create ... a double consciousness.”³⁶ We can speculate that the deliberate hybridity of the Idaian Cave bronzes was intended to eclipse or overshadow established traditions in order to sanction the bronzes as cross-cultural meeting points for commonality, a new beginning, and alignment around a common cult. As Charles Stewart has emphasized, religious practices like pilgrimages “... open an ideological channel ... and in so doing reveal that disparate, and apparently very different, local traditions can and do unite in a common moral framework.”³⁷ It is possible that the combination of visual elements in the Idaian Cave bronzes is the surviving tip of an iceberg consisting of the intentional mix of culturally divergent practices of seeing and being seen.

Moreover, the context of cult suggests a framework of rare and wondrous experiences. Certain iconographic elements disclose the epiphany of divinities, a cultic element with deep roots in the Bronze Age cultures of Crete but also current in the art and rituals of many Near Eastern contexts.³⁸ Other elements are introduced to invite scrutiny and close attention. Pride of place among these is the emphasis on detailed and visual narratives but also the frequent appending of lion protomes in the middle of the visual field of the shields. Ferocious and merciless, with their predatory gazes and roars these beasts hark back to the ubiquitous monsters of Near Eastern daemonology and, like all monsters in art, they have been viewed as apotropaic in nature, that is, guardian figures against human or numinous enemies. This may be true to a large extent. Yet I would argue that the monstrous, by means of its idiosyncratic visual nature, was meant to call attention to the very act of close viewing and scrutiny as appropriate modes of interaction with extraordinary objects. The same concerted focus must have been elicited by the crispness of incision and the tactile vivacity of the shallow repoussé work. This engagement was predicated on the performative circumstances that framed the visibility and accessibility of these special objects. Like the shield of Achilles, the Orientalizing shields of Greece caused terror even as they opened new, unexplored vistas for the initiation and delectation of their viewers.

Although the available archaeological evidence does not allow any insights on the intended audiences of these wondrous objects, we can at least talk with some confidence about their coming into being in the context of some sort of syncretistic encounter.³⁹ It is precisely the shocking and ebullient novelty these religious objects

represent that invites consideration about their being at once products and shapers of hybridic visuality. The “middle ground” here is again the context of a sanctuary, the performative circumstances of which seem to have catalyzed cultural fusion between locals and non-locals and their specific ways of seeing.

These examples demonstrate that the ancient Mediterranean world was home to communicational phenomena that cannot be fully explained within the traditional disciplinary boundaries and classifications in clear-cut categories. It is true that in the past disciplines like archaeology and art history have paid more attention to the objects of vision rather than to their diverse viewers and their attitudes towards them. This reification was necessary but it was perhaps as dangerous as it was unavoidable. I hope that the considerations I formulate in this paper form a small step towards redressing this imbalance.

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NOTES

- 1 James Whitley, *Style and Society in Dark Age Greece: The Changing Face of a Pre-Literate Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ian Morris, *Archaeology as Cultural History: Words and Things in Iron Age Greece* (Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); Nassos Papalexandrou, *The Visual Poetics of Power: Warriors, Youths, and Tripods in Early Greece* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005); Susan Langdon, *Art and Identity in Dark Age Greece, 1100–700 B.C.E.* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- 2 As Robert Nelson has aptly put it, "...visuality is similar to sexuality. Both pertain to natural and universal human acts, but both are also learned, socially controlled, and organized, and therefore domesticated." See Robert S. Nelson, "Introduction: Descartes' Cow and Other Domestications of the Visual," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8–9.
- 3 On the neurophysiology of vision see Samir Zeki, *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); in the same vein, Oliver Sacks's studies continue to shed new light on the neurophysiological aspects of seeing as learned behavior. See, for example, Oliver Sacks, "The Mind's Eye: What the Blind See," *New Yorker*, July 28, 2003, 48–59, esp. 51–55.
- 4 The study is the result of my research on two projects, titled "Art as a Means of Communication in Prehistoric Societies" and "Monsters, Fear, and the Uncanny in Early Greek Visual Culture."
- 5 On visuality see Nelson, *Visuality Before and Beyond*; Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 13–22, 35–126; Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 19–40. For systematic applications of the concept in Roman antiquity see John Clarke, *Arts in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 315* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), and Jas Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007). For the Hellenistic period see Graham Zanker, *Modes of Viewing in Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004). For the Classical period see Froma Zeitlin, "The Artful Eye: Vision, Ekphrasis and Spectacle in Euripidean Theater," in *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture*, ed. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 138–196 and Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell, *Pictorial Narrative in Ancient Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 55–79.
- 6 Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Eagles (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990).
- 7 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- 8 For a working definition of "hybridity" in this paper see below.
- 9 This is not to downplay the hard work of those involved in the scholarly reproduction and elucidation of material culture. My aim is to stress the arbitrariness and contingent character of our own cognitive media, which can obscure as much as they enlighten, especially when it comes to the question of meaning or reconstructing the ancient ways of seeing. See discussion in Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley, *Re-Constructing Archaeology: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 68–100.

- 10 See discussions in Irene Lemos, "Songs for Heroes: The Lack of Images in Early Greece," in *Word and Image in Ancient Greece*, ed. N. Keith Rutter and Brian A. Sparkes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 11–21, and Eva Rystedt and Berit Wells, eds., *Pictorial Pursuits: Figurative Painting on Mycenaean and Geometric Pottery. Papers from Two Seminars at the Swedish Institute at Athens in 1999 and 2001* (Stockholm: Swedish Institute of Athens, 2006).
- 11 Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 1982), 31–77.
- 12 For an attempt to formulate a theoretical basis in light of empirical evidence see the valuable observations by Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 45–58; also of interest is J. A. Abramson, *Art in Nonliterate Societies: Structural Approaches and Implications for Sociocultural and System Theories* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: New Issues Press, 2000).
- 13 Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 49–57, which is more focused on relationships between types of visual expression and structure of society rather than on how visual art communicates in orality.
- 14 Sarah Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3–69; Nikolaus Himmelmann, "The Plastic Arts in Homeric Society," in *Reading Greek Art: Essays by Nikolaus Himmelmann*, ed. W. A. P. Childs (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 25–66.
- 15 My understanding of multisensoriality is informed by David Howes, *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).
- 16 Jeffrey M. Hurwit, *The Art and Culture of Early Greece 1100–480 BC* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 33–70, is a concise discussion of the relevant evidence.
- 17 Gell, *Art and Agency*, 66–95.
- 18 Raymond A. Prier, *Thauma Idesthai: The Phenomenology of Sight and Appearance in Archaic Greek* (Tallahassee: The Florida State University Press, 1989), 81–108; R. K. Fisher, "The Concept of Miracle in Homer," *Antichthon* 29 (1995), 6–9; Himmelmann, "The Plastic Arts ..."; Christine Hunzinger, "La perception du merveilleux: θαυμάζω et θηέομαι," in *Études sur la Vision dans l'Antiquité classique*, ed. Laurence Villard (Rouen: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2005), 29–38.
- 19 Whitley, *Style and Society*, 192–94.
- 20 Ann Gunter, "Models of the Orient in the Art History of the Orientalizing Period," in *Achaemenid History V: The Roots of the European Tradition. Proceedings of the 1987 Groningen Achaemenid History Workshop*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. W. Drijvers (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor de Nabije Oosten, 1990), 131–47; Ann Gunter, *Greek Art and the Orient* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 50–79.
- 21 Prier, *Thauma Idesthai*; Hunzinger, "La perception du merveilleux ..."; Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature*, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (New York: Dover, 1982), 1–5.
- 22 Morris, *Daidalos*; Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, trans. M. E. Pinder and W. Burkert (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Robert Rollinger and Christoph Ulf, *Griechische Archais: Interne Entwicklungen–Externe Impulse* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004); Corinna Riva and Nicholas Vella, eds., *Debating Orientalization: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Change in the Ancient Mediterranean* (London and Oakville, Conn.: Equinox, 2006); Gunter, *Greek Art and the Orient*.
- 23 For the problematic nature of traditional assumptions and methods in assessing the "Orientalizing" in material culture and art see Gunter, "Models of the Orient ..." and Gunter, *Greek Art and the Orient*.
- 24 Joseph W. Shaw, "Kommos: The Sea-Gate to Southern Crete," in *Crete Beyond the Palaces: Proceedings of the Crete 2000 Conference*, ed. Leslie Preston Day et al. (Philadelphia: Instap Academic Press, 2004), 43–52; idem., "Der phönizische Schrein von Kommos auf Kreta," in *Zeit der Helden: Die "dunklen Jahrhunderte" Griechenlands 1200–700 v. Chrs.*, ed. Claus Hattler (Karlsruhe: Badisches Landesmuseum and Primus Verlag Darmstadt, 2008), 250–256. For the Idaian Cave see discussion and references below.
- 25 See the pertinent comments by Carla Antonaccio, "Hybridity and the Cultures within Greek Culture," in *The Cultures within Greek Culture*, ed. C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57–74.
- 26 Peter Brooker, *A Glossary of Cultural Theory* [Electronic Resource], 2nd ed. (London: Arnold, 2003), 126; on hybridity in general see Joel Kuortti and Jopi Nyman, "Introduction: Hybridity Today," in *Reconstructing Hybridity: Post-Colonial Studies in Transition*, ed. J. Kuortti and J. Nyman (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 1–18; on hybridity in archaeology see Peter von Dommelen, "The Orientalizing Phenomenon: Hybridity and Material Culture in the Western Mediterranean," in Riva and Vella, *Debating Orientalization*, 135–52.
- 27 See the considerations by Nicholas Purcell, "Orientalizing: Five Historical Questions," in Riva and Vella, *Debating Orientalization*, 21–30, and Jonathan Hall,

- "Culture, Cultures and Acculturation," in Rollinger and Ulf, *Griechische Archaik*, 35–50; Gunter, *Greek Art and the Orient*, 1–16.
- 28 This is the influential definition by anthropologist Melville Herskovits as quoted in James G. Cusick, "Historiography of Acculturation: An Evaluation of Concepts and Their Application in Archaeology," in *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture, Change, and Archaeology*, ed. James G. Cusick (Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 1998), 130.
- 29 Irene Winter, "The Eyes Have it: Votive Statuary, Gilgamesh's Axe, and Cathected Viewing in the Ancient Near East," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. R. S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22–44.
- 30 Arielle Kozloff and David Mitten, *The Gods Delight: The Human Figure in Classical Bronze* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art and Indiana University Press, 1988), 52–56; Papalexandrou, *Visual Poetics*, 84–86.
- 31 See Papalexandrou, *Visual Poetics*, 99–148, on the formulaic character of these bronzes, which is explainable in terms of their function as visual media in preliterate contexts.
- 32 See Kozloff and Mitten, *The Gods Delight*, 53.
- 33 On the performativity of the inscription on the Mantiklos bronze see Joseph Day, "Interactive Offerings: Early Greek Dedications and Ritual," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 96 (1994): 37–94.
- 34 Emil Kunze, *Kretische Bronzereliefs* (Stuttgart: Verlag Von W. Kohlhammer, 1931).
- 35 Hartmut Matthäus, "Toreutik und Vasenmalerei in früheisenzeitlichen Kreta: Minoisches Erbe, locale Traditionen und Fremdeinflüsse," in *Crafts and Images in Contact: Studies on Eastern Mediterranean Art of the First Millennium BCE*, ed. Claudia Suter and Christoph Uehlinger (Fribourg and Göttingen: Academic Press Fribourg and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 317–323. Matthäus focuses on the famous Lion Hunt shield but similar observations apply to numerous other members of the group. See, for example, Gail Hoffman, "Defining Identities: Greek Artistic Interaction with the Near East," in *Crafts and Images in Contact*, 364–69, who discusses the unique tympanum with winged Assyrianizing genii on either side of a frontal male figure who steps on a bull and triumphantly raises a lion above his head. She detects on this piece a rigorous eclecticism at work, as she puts it "... neither a Near Eastern subject nor a meaningless Cretan borrowing but a very conscious picking and choosing of images to make a complex statement in a new context" (368).
- 36 Quoted along with further discussion in Kuortti and Nyman, "Introduction: Hybridity Today," 7. The distinction between unconscious and intentional hybridity was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin: see idem, 6–7.
- 37 Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 12.
- 38 The bibliography on epiphany is extensive. See Walter Burkert, "From Epiphany to Cult Statue: Early Greek Theos," in *What is God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity* (London: Duckworth, 1997), 15–34; Winter, "The Eyes Have it." On the epiphanic nature of the Idaian Cave shields see Ulrich Gehrig, *Die Greifenprotomen aus der Heraion von Samos*, Samos IX (Bonn: Deutsches Archäologisches Institute, 2004), 168–171.
- 39 See the pertinent comments of Hartmut Matthäus, who acknowledges the cosmopolitan nature of Crete in the ninth and eighth centuries: Hartmut Matthäus, "Die Idäische Zeus-Grotte auf Kreta: Griechenland und der vordere Orient im Frühe 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (2000): 517–547.



NATURALIZING THE EXOTIC

*On the Changing Meanings of Ethnic Dress in Medieval China***Abstract**

This paper proposes a methodological distinction for the study of artifacts of cultural interaction on the one hand, and representations of cultural identity on the other, as an approach to understanding how exotic objects, motifs, and styles become domesticated and normalized over time. It examines the process by which the tunic, trousers, and boots that were understood as non-Chinese (Xianbei-style) men's dress in the visual culture of the late fifth and early sixth century became a form of ordinary men's dress, not particularly ethnically marked, by the seventh. At the same time, Xianbei-style women's dress disappeared entirely, to be replaced first by Chinese-style robes for women and later by newer borrowings from Central Asia. This process, whereby the meaning of an imported form of dress becomes decoupled from its exotic origins, suggests that figures of women and young girls depicted in tunics and trousers in art of the early Tang should for the most part be understood to be dressed as men or boys, not as foreigners. In addition, these changes in the significance of non-Chinese dress styles may also help explain the rise of physiognomy (rather than dress) as a primary visual sign of ethnic difference in the Tang.



1
Pierced gold solidus of Justin I and Justinian I (527 CE), Byzantine, found in the tomb of Tian Hong (d. 575), Guyuan, Ningxia province. After Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 283

2 (OPPOSITE)
Silver platter, provincial Roman, second or third century CE, found in Jingyuan county, Gansu province, in 1988. After Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 321

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD in China, here meaning the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang (ca. 398–907 CE), is widely understood as one of the most cosmopolitan and multicultural in China's history. Objects, people, and ideas flooded into China from Central and Western Asia, traveling along the network of trade routes known collectively as the Silk Road. Studying the movement of objects in this period can offer tremendous insight into the routes of cultural exchange and the change in the way objects were valued as they moved from one culture area to another. Byzantine and Sasanian coins (Fig. 1), for example, are not uncommon finds in Chinese tombs of the sixth and seventh centuries, and the extent to which they were valued is clear from the imitations and copies that are also found in the same tombs.¹ These coins are found throughout medieval Central Asia and clearly moved eastward with merchant travelers along all the major trade routes. At the same time, the further these coins are found from their point of origin, the more likely they are to have been pierced, to enable them to be attached to clothing or jewelry, suggesting that they had lost at least some of their value as money and had instead become exotic ornaments.

Other objects of value and use were also imported into China in this period. One notable example is a second- or third-century silver platter (Fig. 2), probably made in Syria or Egypt, and found in Gansu province during the construction of a house in 1988.² The platter, which has strong Dionysian themes in its decoration,



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3
Brown-glazed earthenware *bian hu* decorated in molded relief, found in the tomb of General Fan Cui (d. 575), Anyang, Henan province. After Chinese Museum of History, *Zhongguo tongshi chenlie*, 103



4

4
Bird-headed ewer with molded decoration, Tang dynasty (618–907). Three-color glazed ceramic. Palace Museum, Beijing. After Watt et al., *China: Dawn of a Golden Age*, 323

is inscribed on the reverse with what appears to be a name in Sogdian script, and with a measure of the vessel's weight in the Greek script used in Bactria during the Sasanian period. This object clearly belongs to the category of imported metalwork from Western and Central Asia, which was generally valued in medieval China, as seen in the finds of imported silver vessels in Chinese tombs and the imitation of these objects by Chinese craftsmen. However, the Sogdian and Bactrian inscriptions on the object testify to an intermediate stage in its life, such that the story it tells is not merely about a binary relationship between the Chinese and Eastern Roman empires.

It is not only imported objects which enable us to consider questions of cultural exchange. Consider a brown-glazed earthenware *bian hu* (pilgrim flask) found in Anyang, Henan, in a Northern Qi tomb dated to 575 CE (Fig. 3).³ It depicts a dancer, flanked by musicians, performing the whirling dance, famous in contemporary literature, known as the *huxuan wu* or “Sogdian whirl.”⁴ The flask is clearly locally produced; it is technologically typical for its time and place, made of earthenware with a lead-fluxed glaze of the sort commonly used for funerary ceramics as early as the Han dynasty. Like other *bian hu* vessels of this period, its form seems to suggest the shape of a waterskin such as might have been used by travelers along the Silk Road; this example is pierced at the shoulder for suspension, as a waterskin might be. However, this is not a shape explicitly borrowed from an imported object in the same way as contemporary ceramic ewers, which were commonly made in imitation of valuable silverwork from Central or Western Asia (Fig. 4). Rather, this piece speaks to questions of cultural exchange principally through the images molded onto its sides.

All five figures are dressed in the long, tight-sleeved, belted tunics, trousers, and boots that were a common feature of Central Asian dress in this period, although they were also widely worn in China. Despite the crude modeling of the figures' faces, we see in one or two of them the "deep eyes and high noses" that, more than details of dress, came to be understood as the hallmark of the foreigner in the seventh century.⁵ One of the musicians is playing the teardrop-shaped *pipa*, a lute derived from Western Asian antecedents and associated with the exotic music that was popular in north China at the time, and the dancer's performance specifically evokes the movements of dancers imported from the Iranian world and described in literature at least as early as the Sui period.⁶ Clearly, the decoration of this object is meant to evoke the prestige of the exotic in medieval China. It does so, not by borrowing the forms or styles of imported objects, but through the representation of foreign people and their practices. As such, it gives us a very different vision of cultural difference and cultural exchange than the imported objects described above, and its study demands a different methodology.

The diffusion of particular object types, styles, materials, and techniques is understood to result from, and thus to reflect, either the migration of populations or exchange between cultures. Hence the presence of Byzantine coins and Roman silver in medieval China, together with locally made objects that imitate their styles and techniques, is understood to be a result of cross-cultural interaction. However, we also rely on images from the past as visual representations of cultural interaction, as in the case of the *bian hu* vessel. Images are, of course, also artifacts, by virtue of their materiality. But representation is notoriously complex, in that it is possible to represent imagination and myth as naturalistically as observed reality. It is also culturally specific: the representational conventions of Chinese visual culture are not necessarily the same as those of, say, Persian visual culture. In short, visual representations of the cultural "other" must be read through the lens of the artistic tradition which produced them. This cautionary note has a useful corollary, which is that visual representations of cultural difference are particularly helpful tools for studying the history of cultural and ethnic identity, which is itself a fundamentally representational phenomenon.

The study of identity through representation demands the use of both the historical and the material record. Because it asks that we investigate not only how things were made, but how they were used (worn, exchanged, displayed, etc.) as a way to assert identity, it follows that relying on objects to "speak for themselves" is of limited usefulness here. The context of discovery of the objects does provide a certain insight into how they might have functioned as signs of identity, but that insight is very limited. For example, it is relatively intuitive to read the ownership, use, and display of luxury imported objects (such as the Roman silver platter men-

tioned above) as a way of asserting identity in medieval China. Imported Western and Central Asian silver and glasswares were clearly prized by their owners, if their inclusion in rich burials is any measure, and probably functioned as a sign of wealth and social prestige. But there is probably more to the story; the question of whether owning imported tablewares (for example) may also have constituted a claim to cosmopolitan or international identity certainly deserves investigation. Further, the simple discovery of Roman silver in China does not really explain the use of Roman silver in China. Was such a vessel used every day, or reserved for special occasions? Was it used to serve food to eminent guests? Was it kept for decoration, and not used at all? Knowing the answers to any of these questions would bring us closer to understanding the social significance of owning such an object, and the ways in which its use functioned to support its owners' claims to identity.

The expression of identity is itself an act of representation. Since we are interested in objects as signs of identity, we must rely on representations both visual and verbal—representational images and historical texts—to show us how these objects might have functioned in the production and negotiation of identity. The Northern Qi pilgrim flask cited at the beginning of this essay, and particularly the figure of the musician playing the *pipa* on the side of the flask, provides us with an example here. The image of the musician, associated as it is with the whirling dancer and several figures whose dress and physiognomy suggest contemporary stereotypes of Central Asians, links playing the *pipa* with ethnic otherness. This is reinforced by a contemporary account attributed to the former Northern Qi official Yan Zhitui (531–91 CE), in his famous book of family instructions, written for the moral guidance of his sons. Yan wrote:

At the court of [the Northern] Qi there was a gentleman who once said to me: "I have a son, who is already seventeen years old, and has some book learning. I am teaching him the Xianbei language and how to play the *pipa*, hoping that he may become proficient in both, and thus better serve our rulers, so that there will be none who does not love him, and want his service." At the time I kept silent and did not reply. How strange, this man's teaching of his son! If by this method, I could make [you all] prime ministers, I still would not have you do it.⁷

Clearly, in the view of both Yan Zhitui and his interlocutor, playing the *pipa* was something that the Xianbei rulers did; in fact, this association forms the crux of their disagreement. We are reminded here that Northern Qi society apparently still drew distinctions between Xianbei and northern Chinese identity, despite the fact that the Xianbei had been resident in China proper for two centuries. Yan Zhitui's

colleague apparently wanted his son to be able to claim some affiliation with Xianbei identity, for reasons of political expedience. Yan's disdain suggests that political expedience alone cannot be the measure of strategies of identity. The two men agreed on the ethnic associations of *pipa* playing, but disagreed fundamentally on how it should be used, and by whom.

Why was playing the *pipa* a sign of ethnic otherness in the Northern Qi? An explanation that focuses on the *pipa* as an object proves insufficient to answer this question. The non-Chinese origins of the instrument are widely known, but difficult to document precisely; broadly speaking, the *pipa* seems to come from Western Asia, where it shares ancestry with the Arabian *'oud* and Western lute. As such, it is unlikely to have been introduced to China by the Xianbei, who appear to have originated in what is now northeastern China and migrated south and west.⁸ Few actual instruments survive from the medieval period, but representations of the *pipa* are found in the art of the Northern Wei during the fifth century, usually as played by flying apsaras on Buddhist monuments. We might guess that the non-Chinese origins of the *pipa* led somehow to its association with non-Chinese (including Xianbei) identity, perhaps through its representation in Buddhism; but in fact this is not a very robust explanation. By contrast, Yan Zhitui's account suggests that *pipa* playing was indeed a part of Xianbei cultural practice during the Northern Qi. Clearly, contemporary practice is a better measure of cultural significance during the Northern Qi than the fact that the instrument was introduced from abroad several centuries earlier, although the two phenomena may ultimately be related.

Here is the main challenge in bridging the gap between artifacts of culture contact and representations of cultural identity: it requires us to account for the change in meaning of objects and images over time. While the origins of the *pipa* as an object and the chronology of its introduction to China are clearly documentable, at least in theory,⁹ the changing meaning of the object over time in the Chinese cultural context is considerably more difficult to pin down. At what point did the *pipa* cease to be a foreign import and begin to be a local object, albeit one with exotic associations? What exactly were those associations? And when did it lose them altogether? The modern *pipa* is usually considered to be a traditional Chinese instrument; although its origins have not been forgotten, the instrument itself no longer conjures up images of ancient Persia.

This process, by which an imported object becomes naturalized and domesticated, is common wherever culture contact occurs, and is as much a part of contemporary experience as of history. For example, a woman wearing a sari on the streets of New York is read as dressing in Indian style, for a number of reasons including the fact that the sari originates in India, and that it is still one of the forms of dress worn by modern Indian women. By contrast, a man wearing a business suit (here

meaning trousers, shirt, tie, vest, and coat) is not assumed to be dressing in Turkish style. Yet it has been argued that the five-piece men's suit, which replaced the doublet as the standard of male dress in seventeenth-century Europe, was borrowed from Ottoman prototypes.¹⁰

Both the sari (as worn in the West) and the Western business suit are artifacts of culture contact; both are also representations of cultural identity, but the way the business suit functions as a sign of identity is no longer related to the circumstances of culture contact that led to its original borrowing. Indeed, it is so far removed from those circumstances that, when the business suit was reintroduced to Turkey in the nineteenth century, it was seen as a Western form of dress, much as in other parts of the world.¹¹ As a result, a study of the Ottoman origins of the business suit has lost its power to explain the suit's significance as a cultural sign today; and, in fact, that power was lost as early as the nineteenth century.

Culture Contact and the Changing Meaning of Dress in Medieval China

A similar change in significance appears to have occurred for a form of dress originally introduced by the Xianbei and other Turkic peoples who settled in northern China after the fall of the Han. Although this attire appears to be ethnically marked where it is represented in the art and literature of the fifth century (early Northern Wei), as little as one hundred years later, in the art of the late sixth to early seventh century (Sui and early Tang), images of men depicted in nearly identical clothing are not particularly marked as Xianbei or otherwise non-Chinese. In other words, it appears that over a century or less, this particular form of nomadic dress lost its ethnic significance and became a type of ordinary dress for men of the Tang, as it grew further removed in time from its original introduction to China.

In this case we are fortunate to have some images that seem to depict an intermediate step in the process. Several Buddhist monuments, mostly dating to the mid-sixth century, depict male worshippers in attire which is related to the dress introduced in the fifth century, while female worshippers' attire is not related to that tradition.¹² This suggests that forms of dress which were once ethnically marked are here beginning to be mapped onto gender instead. Over the course of the sixth century, the design elements that had originally identified nomadic dress became, by the Sui and early Tang, among the elements that identified male dress of certain classes and occupations, regardless of ethnic identity. In other words, the sartorial signs of ethnic identity at the beginning of the sixth century became signs of gender identity, partly modified by class, by the seventh.

The correlation between gender and ethnic dress of these worshipper figures allows us to trace the process by which this transition occurred, and to suggest some of the reasons why it took place. It appears that, during the sixth century, the



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Male and female figurines, probably representing house servants, from an early Western Han tomb. After Rawson, *Mysteries of Ancient China*, 182, cat. 91a-g

nomadic attire of tunic and trousers became associated with a range of male activities and occupations. Hence, it became a common form of male dress (in art, at least) by the turn of the seventh century. This process, by which a particular style of dress lost its earlier significance as a marker of ethnic identity, may also account in part for the shift from dress to physiognomy as a sign of ethnic otherness in the art of the Tang.

A survey of visual materials from the Han dynasty (the period just before the nomadic conquests in northern China) shows that Chinese dress for men and women had been characterized by a few basic design features. It generally took the form of a full-length robe with a wrap closure, held closed by a sash or belt, and full sleeves that in the Han dynasty were gathered into a narrower cuff. The same garment seems to have been worn by men and women alike (Fig. 5). This is not to say that there was no difference between male and female dress in the Han, but rather that, as with the modern Japanese kimono, Han men's dress and women's dress were probably distinguished from each other by choices of fabric, color, and ornamentation, rather than by fundamental differences in cut and construction.¹³

Not everyone wears a long robe in the Han visual record. Where trousers or leggings appear, with a shorter version of the same wrap robe, they seem to be the dress of (male) farmers, soldiers, and others who engage in physical work.¹⁴ This might imply a class distinction in dress, except that many figurines thought to represent house servants are dressed in long robes (as in Fig. 5), so the wearing of trousers seems to be more an occupational than a class-related consideration, except to the extent that manual labor was seen as an occupation of the lower classes.



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6
Male and female figures, detail from a lacquered screen found in the Northern Wei tomb of Sima Jinlong near Datong, Shanxi, ca. 484 CE. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* Editorial Committee, *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihua bian 1* 中國美術全集：繪畫編 1 [Complete collected Chinese art: Painting vol. 1] (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe 1986), 159 top

The figure at left, in the square gauze cap, is male; the cartouche identifies him as Qi, the son of Emperor Yu, while the figure on the right is female, identified as his mother, the exemplary lady of the Tushan.

The same wrap robe with sash and full sleeves continues to appear in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, worn by both men and women (Fig. 6), with minor alterations: the waist is higher and the sleeves of the robe tend to be left open in a dramatic flare. Visual conventions for depicting aristocratic dress in particular often emphasize the fluidity and complexity of flowing sleeves and floating scarves. In terms of basic design, this garment is clearly the descendant of the Han dynasty robe, and as such we can understand it as a form of dress whose origins are indigenous (at least from the point of view of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period). Certain types of male servants, military figures, grooms and so on, continue to wear trousers or leggings, sometimes kilted at the knee, under a shorter version of the same full-sleeved robe. The few Buddhist votive sculptures that survive from southern China in this period tend to show the same pattern, of both male and female patrons in similar Han-derived dress;¹⁵ and given that the aristocracies of the southern states were often descendants of great families of the Han,¹⁶ this is hardly surprising.¹⁷

By contrast, the earliest images of the nomadic rulers of the Northern Dynasties depicted in China show them wearing a front-closing, knee-length tunic with narrow sleeves, typically with a round neckline and no collar, but sometimes V-necked, worn over trousers and boots by men, and over a long skirt by women. The Xianbei founded the Northern Wei dynasty in 398, and this form of dress, combined with a distinctive cap with a flap that hangs down in the back, first appears in the art of China in the early Northern Wei (Fig. 7).¹⁸ These images take the form of funerary figurines, lacquer paintings, and worshipper figures on Buddhist monuments, mostly dating from the fifth century CE.

This attire is clearly related to the dress of other Central Asian peoples of the time, nomadic or otherwise, who often wore some version of the knee-length, close-sleeved tunic or kaftan, and trousers with boots. For example, contemporary



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7
Detail from a lacquer coffin found in a Northern Wei tomb at Guyuan, Ningxia, late fifth century CE. After Zhongguo meishu..., *Huihua bian* 1, 165

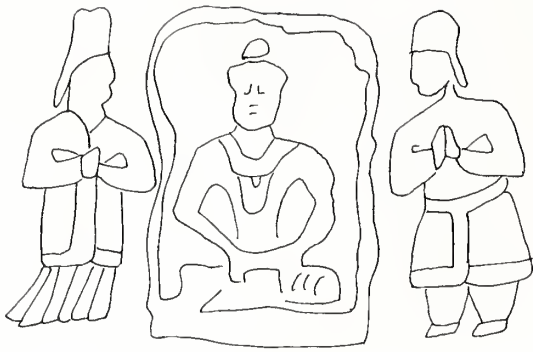
The figures probably represent the filial son, Guo Ju and his wife. The figure at left is male, shown dressed in trousers; the figure at right is female, wearing a skirt under the same long tunic.

Sogdian dress for men seems to have involved a similar tunic with its round collar often worn turned back to form pointed lapels,¹⁹ a convention which persisted into much later periods in Central Asia. It is clear that Xianbei dress had more in common with Central Asian than with Chinese dress in the fifth century, and given the steady movement of Central Asians through northern China throughout the Northern and Southern Dynasties, this relationship was probably evident to residents there.

Thus we can contrast two broad forms of dress that appear in the figural art of the Northern and Southern Dynasties: one which appears to be derived from Han dynasty prototypes, and one which appears to be derived from Xianbei or more generally Central Asian prototypes. Details of these dress styles vary from one example to the next, but the basic contrast in design is relatively consistent. In the discussion that follows, I will refer to these as “Chinese-style” and “Xianbei-style” dress, referring only to the origins of these two distinct designs, and not to their contemporary meaning. As with the business suit and the sari, I am attempting to draw a preliminary distinction between the origins of these forms of dress and subsequent developments of their meaning. While the significance of each form of dress no doubt changed with time and even with particular situations, it seems likely that their origins were probably known, in a general sense, by those who wore them.

Representation, Dress, and Identity in Sixth-Century Imagery

The number of finished garments of any kind that survive from the Northern Dynasties period is vanishingly small; any study of dress and its meaning in this period must rely on visual representations rather than actual examples. The following discussion draws largely on images of patrons and worshippers from Buddhist monuments of the late fifth and the sixth centuries, with some reference to tomb portraits and figurines of the same period. All these images are conventional repre-



8

8
Male (right) and female (left)
worshippers in Xianbei-style dress,
from a small niche in Yungang Cave
9. Northern Wei, before 500 CE.
Drawing by the author



9

9
Worshippers in Chinese-style dress,
from Bhikṣu Faṣheng's niche on
the south wall of the Guyang cave,
Longmen. Northern Wei, 503 CE.
Drawing by the author

The first three figures at left are
monastics, while the group that
follows represents a group of
lay patrons, probably male, with
servants.

sentations of contemporary people of their time. They are not portraits in the sense of being individualized representations of a person's physical appearance; but, like portraits, they function as images of actual individuals, living or dead. To the extent that they convey the identity of the individual, they do so through visual conventions that are used to identify categories of people. Some of these categories are relatively intuitive (for example, the distinction between men and women), while others are probably more culturally and historically specific (as with categories of ethnic identity). Similarly, they should not be construed as unproblematic representations of individual dress practices. The correspondences between identity and dress that are visible in these images are conventional ones. Thus these images can help us recognize a range of categories used to construct and represent identity, but they should not be taken as the measure of what the people represented actually wore in daily life.

In Buddhist votive art of the fifth and early sixth centuries in northern China, the typical visual convention is for male and female patrons of the same family or donors' group to be depicted in the same form of dress, be it Xianbei-style or Chinese-style. Xianbei-style dress is most common on images produced during the fifth century, particularly at the Yungang cave temples near Datong (Fig. 8) and in the earliest carvings at Longmen. Images produced in the first third of the sixth century tend to show patrons in Chinese-style dress, as exemplified by the art of the majority of Northern Wei caves at Longmen (Fig. 9), as well as late carvings at Yungang. It is not clear in either case that dress is a sign of the ethnic identity of the wearer, since the patrons of the Yungang and Longmen caves generally came from the same aristocratic social class, which in the Northern Wei was heavily but not exclusively Xianbei. Rather, it is the historical context of the change from one form of dress to the other that suggests the difference between the two was ethnically marked.

This shift in representational convention corresponds with the move of the Northern Wei capital from Pingcheng to Luoyang in 493 and with official reforms in the 490s that required Chinese-style dress to be worn at court; it is usually assumed that the dress of worshipper figures in northern China after 500 reflects those reforms, which explicitly contrast Chinese-style and Xianbei-style dress.²⁰ Katherine Tsiang points out that the official dress of the Northern Wei after the move to Luoyang was designed particularly for the court by officials and diplo-



10

10

Male worshippers in Xianbei-style dress (right) and female worshippers in Chinese-style dress (left), from the north wall of Cave 285 at Dunhuang; one of six such examples. Western Wei, 538 CE. After Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku*, 1: plate 128

mats who were “not likely to have simply copied the southern palaces, carriages, and costumes wholesale but instead would have taken them into consideration in designing their own system of official ranking and court ritual.”²¹ Nonetheless, both textual and visual sources show that the style in question, known as *baoyi bodai*, or “voluminous robes and wide sashes” (Tsiang’s translation), was clearly descended from Chinese-style robes like those worn under the Han, rather than from nomadic tunics and trousers.

After the fall of the Northern Wei in 534, male figures in tunic and trousers begin to reappear on Buddhist monuments and in tomb murals, but to the best of my knowledge, the female version of Xianbei-style dress is nowhere to be seen in the art of China after the year 500. Rather, male patrons who may appear in either Xianbei-style or Chinese-style dress are partnered with female patrons in sweeping, wide-sleeved Chinese-style robes. This is the point at which what was once an ethnic distinction begins to take on elements of gender representation.

The earliest clear example of this pattern of male and female dress that I can identify is in Dunhuang Cave 285, dated by inscription to 538 CE in the Western Wei period.²² Cave 285 is well-known for its complex narrative and decorative imagery, which combines supernatural and ornamental motifs from pre-Buddhist Chinese art with Buddhist iconography. Also noteworthy is the distinctly Central Asian-looking style of the painted figures on the west wall, which contrasts with the strongly Northern Wei flavor of the figures on the north and east walls. It is, in other words, a visually innovative space in more senses than one.

It is the north and east walls of Cave 285 that are of interest here: the imagery on these walls consists of a series of compositions of preaching Buddha figures flanked by attendant bodhisattvas, with worshipper figures below. There are seven such tableaux on the north wall and two on the east wall. In each case, the worshippers at the bottom of the image are divided by gender, with male figures (identifiable by their doubled sword-belts and occasional facial hair, as well as by male names in the cartouches) on the Buddha’s own left and female figures (with female names) on his right. In every case, the female figures are in Chinese-style dress, and in every case but one, the male figures are in Xianbei-style dress (Fig. 10). The male



11

11

Worshippers from the north wall of Cave 285 at Dunhuang, Western Wei, 538 CE. After Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku*, 1: plate 123, left

Note the three male figures at bottom right in Chinese-style attire, the only such examples in the cave.

exceptions are identifiable by their high, round, flat-topped hats with descending earflaps, made of stiffened gauze, the so called *longguan* or “cage hats” worn over a smaller cap (Fig. 11).²³

The worshippers in Cave 285 are unusual for pre-Tang Dunhuang in that some of their names and dedication texts have survived. Four separate dedications are found on the north wall, dated to the years 538–39.²⁴ All four are conventionalized texts in which patrons lament the dearth of Buddhist virtue and dedicate the merit from their image-making to the growth of the dharma, the rebirth of their deceased relatives, and the well-being of their families and themselves. The names of the patrons indicate that they were organized into family groups led by monastic advisors. To the extent that the individual relationships can be established, these groups appear to have been led by a husband and wife (the first layman and laywoman in each group of worshippers), together with their younger siblings and/or children. The 538 dedication is by members of the Yin (陰) family,²⁵ while the two inscriptions from 539 are by members of the Hua (滑) family.²⁶ (The fourth, whose date is obliterated, is by a monk with the dharma-name Huizun, accompanied by the nun Huisheng. Their family affiliations are untraceable.) A family of officials named Yin who served under the Northern Wei in the late fifth and early sixth centuries was said to originate in Guzang, not far from Dunhuang;²⁷ so the members of the Yin family in Cave 285 may be members of a related local lineage. By contrast, Hua does not appear as a surname in the official histories of the period,²⁸ so it may not be possible to learn much more about this family.

In no case is it possible to establish the ethnic background of the groups of patrons in Cave 285 with any degree of certainty,²⁹ but in fact this is beside the point.

The figures that represent these patrons do not appear to be particularly marked for ethnicity, which suggests that it was not a primary concern in this context. As noted above, the visual styles of the wall paintings suggest a degree of multiculturalism: indeed, the differences between the west wall and the other three walls and ceiling are so striking as to suggest artists trained in wholly different regional styles. This does not speak to the ethnicity of the patrons, however, beyond a level of comfort with cultural juxtaposition that should surprise no one familiar with the region and the period. In other words, there is no reason to think that dress among the worshipper figures of Cave 285 is an indicator of the ethnic identity of the wearer. Rather, the strong correlation between gender and attire in this case appears to be conventional.

Relatively few of the fifth-century caves at Dunhuang have worshipper figures that survive, and few of those that do are well published, so it is difficult to compare the worshippers in Cave 285 with earlier examples from the same site. Cave 275, dating to the Northern Liang (397–439) and one of the earliest surviving caves at Dunhuang, opposes male worshipper figures in Xianbei-style dress on the north wall with worshipping bodhisattvas on the south wall;³⁰ there are no identifiable female worshippers at all. However, a general survey of published materials does turn up other Western Wei (535–56) and Northern Zhou (557–81) caves at Dunhuang that repeat the same pattern as in Cave 285. The clearest example is Cave 428, dated to the Northern Zhou, whose worshipper figures are largely monastic. The lay male worshippers, however, do appear in Xianbei-style dress while the lay female worshippers wear Chinese-style dress.³¹ The same appears to be true of Caves 290 and 297,³² though the worshipper figures in these cases are imperfectly legible due to damage.

There are nowhere near enough published examples to generalize about the depiction of worshippers as a whole in sixth-century Dunhuang; that would require a far more thorough on-site survey of the pre-Tang caves. But in these few examples it is clear that when nomadic and Chinese dress appear in the same group of worshippers, they always follow the same pattern: men in tunics and trousers or boots, and women in wide-sleeved robes. The few exceptions are occasional male figures in robes — never a female figure in Xianbei-style dress. In other words, when Xianbei-style dress reappears at Dunhuang after the fall of the Northern Wei dynasty, it reappears as a form of men's attire. The Chinese-style robe for men has not entirely disappeared, but its occasional appearance suggests that it was reserved for men of a particular status — perhaps for high civil officials, among others, who could perform their duties in such cumbersome dress.

Other cave-temple sites from the Hexi corridor have fewer examples to offer. This is partly because the surviving sixth-century materials from these sites do not always include worshipper figures. Worshippers are, of course, peripheral to the



12

12
Individual male and female
worshipper figures from the front
(south) wall of Shuiyusi cave temple,
Northern Qi, ca. 571 CE. Photograph
by the author



13

13
“Worshipping scene” (*lifo tu*) with
male and female worshippers, from
the front (south) wall of Shuiyusi
cave temple, Northern Qi, ca. 571 CE.
Photograph by the author

main iconic content of Buddhist votive art, in that one can make a Buddhist image without worshippers, but not without an icon such as a Buddha or a bodhisattva, or a narrative image from the scriptures. Among the cave temples of Maijishan are some with worshipper figures dating to the Northern Wei, Western Wei, and Northern Zhou. These include figures in Xianbei-style dress³³ and figures in Chinese-style dress,³⁴ but none are sufficiently well-published to establish whether the same juxtaposition occurs. The existing images do not suggest that it does.

Similarly, Binglingsi is known for several groups of female worshipper figures found on the wall of Cave 169, which is dated by inscription to the year 420 in the Western Qin period,³⁵ but as at Maijishan, corresponding male figures are no longer visible (if they ever existed). One group of female worshippers from Cave 169 appear in clearly Chinese-style dress, but another group have long attracted attention for their ethnically ambiguous attire. Dorothy Wong presents a comparison of the two groups in which she suggests that the short coat over a long skirt worn by the second group is “consistently associated with nomadic women,”³⁶ and yet these coats are much shorter than the tunics worn by women in Xianbei-style dress, while they also have the wrap closure and full sleeves which are usually associated with Chinese-style dress.³⁷ The dress of these worshippers looks as though it might be related to women’s attire seen in tombs of the Koguryo kingdom, on the northern part of the Korean peninsula, dating largely from the fourth to seventh centuries.³⁸ Annette Juliano describes the Binglingsi figures as Korean on the basis of this sort of similarity.³⁹ In any event, they do not appear to be wearing Xianbei-style dress and thus do not lend themselves to comparison with examples like Dunhuang Cave 285.

In the Chinese heartland, examples of the juxtaposition of male worshipper figures in Xianbei-style dress with female figures in Chinese-style dress appear somewhat later than at Dunhuang. The most striking come from the cave temple of Shuiyusi, located outside the old city of Ye, near modern Handan in southern Hebei province, and dated to about 570 in the Northern Qi period.⁴⁰ Shuiyusi is an outlier of the better-known Xiangtangshan cave temples. It was dedicated by a group led by local women and monks, but including both male and female lay donors, and it features hundreds of worshipper figures representing those donors, arranged in registers on the front and side walls of the cave. All the lay male worshippers are dressed in some version of Xianbei-style attire, with only one exception, while all the female worshippers are dressed in Chinese-style attire.



14

14

Individual worshipper figures, with at right a male worshipper in Chinese-style dress with servants in Xianbei-style dress, from the east wall of Shuiyusi cave temple, Northern Qi, ca. 571 CE. Photograph by the author

Shuiyusi is a central-pillar cave with five main niches (on the front and sides of the central pillar, and on the two side walls) containing figures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Worshippers appear on the front wall of the cave, flanking the door in two groups which extend around the corner of the chamber to the side walls. Most of the worshippers are arranged in five registers of individual figures (Fig. 12), while a small number are set apart in a pair of more complex compositions typically described as “veneration scenes” or *lifo tu* (禮佛圖) (Fig. 13). Most of the figures are uninscribed, but the few that have inscriptions include both laymen and laywomen, thus enabling us to identify the visual distinctions between male and female figures in the cave. Men and women are also distinguished by different types of headgear, as well as occasionally by masculine accoutrements such as a sword and sword-belt.

The lay male worshippers in these scenes are dressed in narrow-sleeved, belted tunics and shod in boots, and wear headcloths with a rounded crown covering the hair and a flap covering the back of the neck. Their (male) servants are similarly dressed, but wear headcloths folded at the top into a triangular shape reminiscent of the flattened crown of a kepi cap. The lay female worshippers, by contrast, are dressed in high-waisted, wrap-style robes with wide sleeves and skirts, and shoes with upturned, fan-shaped toes. Their hair is tied up in an asymmetrical roll. The laywomen’s servants are dressed in similar fashion to their mistresses. This general pattern of dress also holds for the individual worshippers at Shuiyusi. In other words, the male figures are all dressed in what we have come to see as Xianbei-style dress, while the female figures wear Chinese-style dress. The one exception, as at Dunhuang, is a male figure in Chinese-style dress, identifiable by his *longguan* cap, whose (male) servants wear Xianbei-style dress (Fig. 14).

Indeed, in the exceptional cases where a male worshipper appears dressed in a wide-sleeved robe, it is not uncommon to find tunics and trousers or boots worn by the male servants who accompany him,⁴¹ and this may suggest that in certain contexts the difference in design implied a difference in class or at least in occu-

pation. Rather than surveying the attire of servants as a separate case, I will limit myself to pointing out that in the examples I am presenting, female servants are generally dressed in the same Chinese style as their mistresses. The implication here is that, while Xianbei-style dress may have been associated with particular occupations, they were clearly male occupations; in other words, the apparent association between forms of dress and class or occupation (which mirrors that observed in the Han period) does not disrupt the gendering of dress we have already observed.

The patrons of the Shuiyusi cave were mostly female: the inscriptions in the cave identify five monks, two laymen, and thirty-five laywomen as members of the *yi*-society (邑義 or 義社, a Buddhist charitable society) which was responsible for the construction of the cave.⁴² The ranks of worshipper figures that are carved on the walls of the cave, however, number in the hundreds; in other words, most of the worshipper figures lack the inscriptions that would identify them with actual patrons of the cave. This is not especially remarkable or even unusual, and probably implies that whoever organized the construction of the cave (probably the monks and some of the laywomen, whose inscribed titles imply leadership of the *yi*-society) failed to attract as many patrons as they had hoped when planning its decoration.

Unlike Cave 285 at Dunhuang, the patrons at Shuiyusi do not appear to be organized into family groups, and it is not clear what relationship if any existed between the lay male and female members of the *yi*-society. *Yi*-societies were sometimes composed of members of an extended family or lineage or a clan village, but the structure of the *yi*-society was not necessarily a family structure. Such organizations could also be made up of unrelated members. Again, as at Dunhuang, it is impossible to make any positive statement about the ethnic origin of the patrons of Shuiyusi. With the exception of two of the monks (Sengcan, whose name is the same as that of the third patriarch of the Chan lineage, and his disciple Dingchanshi), none of the patrons appear in contemporary historical texts or known tomb epitaphs. The surnames of the patrons include conventionally Chinese names like Meng (孟) and Zhang (張), as well as names associated with non-Chinese families of the period. The latter include Murong (慕容), which was the name of the Xianbei rulers of the Former Yan (337–70) and Later Yan (384–409),⁴³ as well as Qu (麴), which was the name of the ruling family of the kingdom of Khocho (Gaochang 高昌, modern Turfan) in the period 500–640.⁴⁴ At least one of the leading patrons of the cave, Zhang Yuanfei, seems to have been the wife of a minor official from a family of commoners,⁴⁵ and it is possible that other patrons in the *yi*-society were of comparably middling social status. Like the patrons of Dunhuang Cave 285, in other words, they seem to be typical local northern Chinese of their time, in that they may have had some non-Chinese ancestry but do not appear to have been

marked, in this context at least, as ethnic “outsiders” or members of an immigrant community.

While unusual, Shuiyusi is not a unique example for its time and place. The same association between gender and Xianbei-style dress is found on at least one other Buddhist monument, a badly eroded stele in the collection of the Shanxi provincial museum in Taiyuan.⁴⁶ The museum attributes this stele to the Northern Wei, but there is no dated inscription, and the robust and compact style of the Buddha-figures in the main niche suggest a date after 550. The piece was found in Ruicheng in southwestern Shanxi province. The main body of the stele is covered with the names of several hundred donors belonging to a very large *yi*-society that was apparently made up of members of the Chen family. It is not clear who exactly the two worshipper figures represent, but given the number of patrons whose names are inscribed on the stele, they may either show the male and female leaders of the *yi*-society, or stand in for all the male and female patrons in the group.

Some images found in a funerary context also reflect the same gendering of previously ethnic dress. A double portrait from an aristocratic Northern Qi tomb near Taiyuan, for example, shows the male tomb occupant, Xu Xianxiu, in Xianbei-style tunic, trousers, and boots, while the female occupant (his wife) wears a Chinese-style wrap robe with wide sleeves and a high waist. Xu Xianxiu’s tomb is dated to the year 571, almost exactly contemporary with Shuiyusi.⁴⁷ By structure and decoration, it belongs to the group of Eastern Wei and Northern Qi tombs which Zheng Yan has called the “Yecheng type.”⁴⁸ Several other elaborately painted tombs of the same type have been discovered in Hebei and Shanxi provinces, but none contains an analogous double portrait that is sufficiently well-preserved to provide a second example of juxtaposed male and female dress.⁴⁹ As with the Buddhist material, there are also double tomb portraits from the sixth century, particularly from the late Northern Wei, showing husband and wife in the same form of (Chinese-style) dress.⁵⁰

Images of servants in these tombs, though often better preserved, cannot be compared directly to images of the tomb occupants because they do not belong to the same social class (the same is true for ceramic tomb figurines). Further, it can be hard to establish equivalency in class or occupation between male and female servants, whether painted or sculpted, such that reading the specifically gendered differences between their dress styles is difficult. Nevertheless, in tombs of the Yecheng type, many mural paintings of male servants, marked by their facial hair or military gear, depict them in Xianbei-style dress, particularly in the Northern Qi tombs of Xu Xianxiu, Gao Run, and Lou Rui.⁵¹ Images of female servants are rarer and sometimes hard to identify, but those in the main chamber of Xu Xianxiu’s tomb (the musicians by the side of the female tomb occupant, who wear the same headdress as she does) wear a narrow-sleeved coat over a three-quarter-length gown, a new

form of dress whose antecedents are unclear.⁵² The narrow sleeves might suggest a closer affinity to Xianbei-style dress than to Chinese-style dress, but this form of attire over all does not represent a revival of Xianbei-style female dress as seen in northern Chinese art before the year 500, lacking as it does the full-length skirt that hid the feet of women in Xianbei-style dress, and including the open-fronted coat which appears to be an entirely new development. To the extent that it is related to Xianbei-style dress for men, it may be an early example of women dressing in men's clothing styles, as seen later in the Tang dynasty (see below). By contrast, several of the analogous figures in Lou Rui's tomb, though damaged, appear to be wearing Chinese-style wrap robes like that worn by their mistress.⁵³

Both Zheng Yan⁵⁴ and Judith A. Lerner⁵⁵ have pointed out the strong connection between the mural paintings in Xu Xianxiu's tomb and the imagery found on carved stone coffin platforms and sarcophagi from the tombs of Sogdian officials resident in China in the sixth and seventh centuries. It is a common convention of the banqueting scenes in particular for the tomb occupant to be portrayed in clothing much like what we have been calling Xianbei-style dress (Lerner identifies it as generally Central Asian), while his wife is portrayed in Chinese-style dress.⁵⁶ Lerner and Annette Juliano had taken up the question of dress in this body of material as early as 1997,⁵⁷ but Lerner's more recent article addresses the garments of the tomb occupants specifically. She points out that in the Chinese context, Sogdian female dress appears to have been associated with entertainers, particularly dancers (who would have been of relatively low social status, like many performers). The wives of the *sabaos*, Sogdian officials of high social status in China, may have wished to distinguish themselves from this class of people, and thus may have sought to be depicted in Chinese female attire.⁵⁸

The case of the Sogdian funerary materials presents an interesting comparison with that of the Buddhist cave temples we have been tracing so far. The two phenomena overlap somewhat in time: the caves date from about 534 to the Sui reunification in 589, while the funerary materials date from the late sixth to mid-seventh centuries. Both represent contexts in which male figures are dressed in non-Chinese (Xianbei-style or Central Asian) attire and corresponding female figures are dressed in Chinese-style attire. In the Sogdian funerary materials, this gender divide is usually exemplified by the images of male and female tomb occupants, and may or may not extend to other figures such as servants, while in the Buddhist context, the same type of dress is generally worn by all male patrons and by all female patrons.

It seems unlikely that Lerner's explanation of the phenomenon—that the depiction of women in Chinese dress was a deliberate move by upper-class women in a particular ethnic group to avoid association with their lower-class compatri-

ots (see above) — can be extended to the Buddhist cave temples and steles. First of all, in the Buddhist context, the choice of dress seems to belong to men rather than women; men are seen in both Xianbei-style and in Chinese-style dress, while women appear exclusively in Chinese-style dress. In this context, Chinese-style dress is a sort of norm against which Xianbei-style dress becomes a variant choice, an apparent inversion of the situation Lerner describes. Second, Lerner’s “Central Asian” dress and Xianbei-style dress adhere to the same basic design principles (narrow-sleeved, front-closing tunic, trousers or leggings, boots).⁵⁹ She interprets the garb as Central Asian in the context of the strikingly Sogdian flavor of the carvings generally; but it is worth pointing out that the gendered dress of the tomb occupants is also in line with broader Tang conventions for representing men’s and women’s dress, which I argue below are not particularly marked as signs of ethnicity. These may in fact be among Lerner’s “images that can have meaning in both a Chinese and Sogdian context,”⁶⁰ and in this case I would suggest that those meanings are somewhat different.

Finally, the funerary materials that Lerner examines are clearly associated with Sogdian tomb occupants, often *sabao* officials living in China, and a number of them include clearly Zoroastrian imagery. The Buddhist materials, by contrast, cannot be clearly associated with patrons of any particular ethnic origin, although the patrons most likely had some non-Chinese ancestry. It is unlikely that the patrons of the cave temples were all or even mostly Sogdians. There were, of course, Buddhist Sogdians as well as Zoroastrian and Manichaean Sogdians,⁶¹ and to the extent that Sogdians living in sixth- and seventh-century China adopted Chinese burial practice (which is Lerner’s thesis), they may also have absorbed the Chinese tendency to leave Buddhist imagery out of the tombs of even very active lay Buddhists.⁶² But there is no evidence to identify most of the Buddhist patrons we have been examining as Sogdians, and it seems just as likely that they were Xianbei or Xiongnu or northern Chinese of more or less mixed ancestry.

Lerner’s work does remind us of the fact that Central Asian men did not stop wearing tunics and trousers just because Chinese men began to wear them. That is, while we can observe that men of the Tang are depicted wearing tunics and trousers without any sense that they are dressed exotically, we must also observe that the same is true for images of foreigners in China in the same period. We cannot expect this form of dress to have lost all its associations with the ethnic other, but it has obviously lost its force as a primary sign of ethnic difference. The Sogdian funerary materials often feature other cues to indicate that the tunics and trousers worn by figures on them are to be understood as foreign dress: among these are beribboned headdresses (on the Yu Hong sarcophagus⁶³), mantles worn draped over the shoulders in the fashion of a modern Hungarian *szűr*⁶⁴ (the Miho



15



16

15

Female worshippers from the north wall of Dunhuang Cave 62, Sui dynasty (589–618 CE). After Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku*, 2: plate 129

16

Male worshippers from the north wall of Dunhuang Cave 62, Sui dynasty (589–618 CE). After Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku*, 2: plate 127

bed,⁶⁵ the bed of Kang Ye⁶⁶), and prominent pearl borders (also found on the Yu Hong sarcophagus). Similarly, images of Central Asians in the Tang often rely on stereotypes of Western Asian physiognomy, distinctive headgear, or exotic materials (like furs) to distinguish the foreign from the local, rather than relying on the cut of clothing.

By contrast, the combination of mid-length, round-collared, belted tunic with close-fitting sleeves, worn over trousers and boots, was sufficiently common for early Tang men that a painting of a Chinese couple from the late seventh century, found in the Sogdian city of Panjikent, shows the male half of the couple in just this attire (along with the soft black headcloth worn by Tang men).⁶⁷ That this form of dress should be used to indicate Chinese identity to a Sogdian viewer indicates the extent to which it had been normalized as a form of Chinese dress. Similarly, the figural art of the Sui and Tang implies that what we see occasionally in the sixth century became a regular visual convention in the seventh, and that what appears to be Central Asian or Xianbei-style dress in the Northern Dynasties is to be read as ordinary male dress in the art of the Sui and Tang.



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17

Male attendants, from the west wall of the entry corridor, tomb of Prince Yide, Tang dynasty, first decade of the eighth century. After Zhongguo meishu quanji Editorial Committee, *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihua bian* 12 中國美術全集繪畫編 12 [Complete collected Chinese art: Painting vol. 12] (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe 1989), 106

By the Tang dynasty the round-collared tunic, trousers and boots are a common form of male dress in all forms of art (although the Chinese-style robe continues to appear on some images of court officials), while women wear any number of variations on the theme of the long, full-skirted robe, with wide or narrow sleeves depending on the period. It is not the case that women's attire was not influenced by Central Asian styles; indeed, many Tang women's fashions were described as explicitly Central Asian.⁶⁸ But these were new introductions travelling along the Silk Road, and they do not resemble the dress of nomadic women from a century earlier; rather, Tang women emulated the contemporary women of Central Asia in their dress. A few examples: At Dunhuang first of all, the Sui and Tang worshipper figures continue to show women in long, full-skirted robes, though waistlines, jackets, and sleeves change over the decades with the vagaries of fashion (Fig. 15). Men are consistently shown in a round-collared tunic, trousers or leggings and boots (Fig. 16). Tomb mural paintings of the early Tang show the same male dress (Fig. 17).

Gender, Ethnicity, and the Sources of Tang Dress

Two things are remarkable about Tang fashion as represented in contemporary art. First, it is characterized by distinct differences of design between the dress of men and women of the same social class, which is not characteristic of the dress we have been characterizing as "Chinese-style" up to this point (i.e., the long wrap robe of the Han or of the Southern Dynasties). Second, these differences in design are essentially those which were ethnically marked a century earlier. By the Tang they have more or less lost their force as ethnic signs and have come to be signs of gender: even when we see young girls in Tang art wearing tunics and trousers (Fig. 18), we should probably understand them to be dressed as boys, as much as or more than as nomads or Central Asians, since their clothing most closely resembles ordi-



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Female attendants, from the west wall of the front chamber, tomb of Prince Zhanghuai, Tang dynasty, first decade of the eighth century. After Zhongguo meishu..., *Huihua bian* 12, 111

nary men's dress of the time. Shen Congwen describes images of this type as "Tang women in Central Asian dress," but I would argue that only in cases where this form of dress is combined with more exotic details (such as the serving girl from the Wei Xiang tomb who wears a fur-lined hat of Central Asian shape)⁶⁹ should we assume that these women were dressing as Central Asians. In this they share a pictorial logic with the Sogdian funerary materials discussed above. The ordinary version of this kind of Tang dress is no more Central Asian when worn by girls than it is when worn by men.

Suzanne Cahill addresses this question in an article on Western Asian influences on Tang women's clothing.⁷⁰ Her discussion veers between identifying this form of dress as "men's attire" and "foreign men's clothing," but she also writes:

Women in men's clothing are often seen in art, but rarely mentioned in texts; the relative lack of textual reference may be due to the fact that what was remarkable to a medieval Chinese observer about a woman in foreign male dress was the outlandishness of her clothes, not her cross-dressing. The important boundary between categories she transgressed was Chinese vs. foreigner, not woman vs. man.⁷¹

I believe that Cahill is mistaken in this conclusion. She is right to point out that the numerous mentions of women in Central Asian-influenced dress in Tang literature are not balanced by writing about women dressing as men, and that this probably implies that men's dress was less remarkable than foreign dress for a Tang woman. However, her discussion is premised on the assumption that the round-necked tunic and trousers (as in Fig. 18) were still seen as foreign dress first and foremost, and that this form of attire was among the foreign "styles of the times"

decried by cultural conservatives like Bo Juyi.⁷² Tang poets spend much less ink bemoaning the taste of Tang men for foreign fashion (despite the fact that they were wearing exactly the same thing as these young girls), and this should suggest to us that young Tang women in tunics and trousers were not particularly understood to be dressing as foreigners. They are clearly dressing as men, however. The fact that they are not chastised for it in the literature merely suggests that this was an acceptable (or at least unremarkable) transgression of boundaries at that time.

The one historical source Cahill has identified which does actually speak to the question of women in men's clothing is the *Xin Tang shu* (New Tang History), published circa 1060. The citation in question is from a discussion of the dress of Tang palace women, and reads "there were those who dressed in men's clothing and wore boots like the attire of the Khitan or Xi people."⁷³ This is particularly interesting since it juxtaposes men's dress with foreign dress; however, the fact that the writer compares the women he is describing to the Khitan and the Xi, indexical foreigners of the Northern Song⁷⁴ — rather than, say, the Sogdians or Uighurs who were commonly the ethnic "other" confronted by the Tang — suggests that, when this writer claims that Tang women were wearing foreign dress, his opinion reflects Song more than Tang concerns. In fact, the author's source for this appears to be a parallel passage in the *Jiu Tang shu* (Old Tang History), published circa 945, in which the writers state that, among palace women, "there were those who wore men's clothing, dressing in boots and tunics; noble and base, domestic and foreign, all shared this custom."⁷⁵ This earlier passage acknowledges that the men's tunics and boots worn by these women were like those worn by foreigners, but it does not suggest that the women in question were dressing in a style that was understood as primarily foreign.

Returning to the Northern Dynasties, one possible explanation for the sixth-century monuments I have described might be that they are evidence of a cultural logic that somehow associated northern, nomadic culture with masculinity, and Chinese culture with femininity. If this were the case, it would be understandable that by the Tang the corresponding differences in attire should come to stand for gender difference rather than ethnic difference. It has been pointed out to me that the association of northern culture with masculinity and southern culture with femininity is one of the oldest clichés of the historical writers who composed most of the histories of the sixth century.⁷⁶ It seems more likely that the key to understanding the association is that the nomadic tunic and trousers were associated, not with masculinity per se, but with activities that were characteristically male, particularly including military activities.⁷⁷

There is some limited evidence from pre-Tang writers to suggest that, in the North at least, nomadic cultural practices were seen as virile, by contrast with the

practices of effeminate and servile southerners. The story of the southern prince Wang Su, who fled north in the early sixth century, is recorded in the mid-sixth-century *Luoyang qielan ji* (Monasteries of Luoyang). Wang Su was noted for his strange tastes, preferring carp soup to mutton and drinking tea in such quantity that he was nicknamed “Leaky Goblet.” Though he started a short-lived fashion for tea at the Northern Wei court, it was cut short by the words of a general who called it a practice of southern servants.⁷⁸ While the food and drink of north and south China are not described in explicitly gendered terms in this story, the dining-table banter of the Northern Wei generals conveys a strong sense that real men don’t eat carp soup.

That said, the practical uses of nomadic dress have a long pedigree in the Chinese historical record. Ever since the famous debate at the court of King Wuling of Zhao in the late Warring States period, in which the king advocated dressing his soldiers in “nomadic dress” (胡服) and training them as cavalry archers,⁷⁹ the Central Asian men’s attire of tunic and trousers has been noted in Chinese sources as being more suitable for mounted warfare and horseback riding in general than full Chinese-style court robes. To the extent that mounted warfare and horseback riding were understood as male activities in China in the Northern Dynasties (think of the nomadic legend of Mulan, who had to dress as a man to go to war with the khan’s armies), we might expect nomadic dress to have had more influence on male dress than on female dress in the period.

This also serves to explain a parallel change in the representation of ethnic identity in art that took place around the same time. As Marc Abramson has pointed out, the visual conventions for representing ethnic non-Chinese in the Tang are famously physiognomic. Tang imagery tends to distinguish the *hu* from the Han by means of stereotyped facial features which China associated with Western Asian peoples: deep-set eyes, large, hooked, noses, and full, bushy beards.⁸⁰ This is by contrast to the situation around the turn of the sixth century, when the chief visual indicators of non-Chinese identity in representational art seem to have been sartorial — details of clothing and headgear. Since what had been the key design differences between Chinese and nomadic dress appear to have lost their ethnic associations in China over the course of the sixth century, it may have become necessary to find a new visual indicator of ethnic difference in the form of physiognomy. Where physiognomy is not the primary cue (as in the Sogdian funerary materials) then foreign hats, cloaks, and textiles are added to make the point.

But when exactly did tunic and trousers lose their force as sure signs of ethnic difference? If the Tang is merely the culmination of a century-long process by which the nomadic tunic and trousers become a form of male dress, perhaps we should consider the possibility that what we have called Xianbei-style dress in Bud-

dhist art of the second half of the sixth century is better read simply as a variety of male dress. The point is that it may take relatively little time for a functional form of dress (such as, for example, tunic and trousers) to acquire conventional associations. Given that images of men in nomadic-style dress with women in Chinese-style dress appear so consistently at Dunhuang from the founding of the Western Wei onward, and in the Central Plains from the founding of the Northern Qi, we should consider the possibility that what we read as differences in ethnic attire in the Northern Wei should be understood as differences in gendered attire relatively soon after its fall; that the change from dress to physiognomy as a visual sign of ethnic difference has its roots in the 530s and 540s, seventy or eighty years before the founding of the Tang.

The history of dress in medieval China is based largely on representational art, rather than on discoveries of actual examples of clothing; while fragments of textiles survive from the period, whole garments are rare. But although the discovery of finished Xianbei-style garments from the period (the artifacts of culture contact) would provide important documentation of their introduction and use, ultimately it is visual representations that allow us to study their changing meaning (as signs of cultural identity). Like the *pipa* and the Western business suit, Xianbei-style dress is represented in China long past the point when it is explicable solely in terms of its foreign origins. It continues to function as a sign of identity, but the focus of that identity shifts from ethnicity to occupation and thence ultimately to gender. All of these aspects of identity are enacted in the representational art of the time, and it is there that we should look for the evidence to explain Xianbei-style dress and its shifting meaning.

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NOTES

- 1 Michael Alam, "Coins and the Silk Road," in *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China, Gansu and Ningxia, 4th–7th Century*, ed. Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner (New York: Harry N. Abrams and Asia Society, 2001), 273–90.
- 2 James C. Y. Watt et al., *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 AD* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2004), 184–85.
- 3 Chinese Museum of History, *Zhongguo tongshi chenlie* 中國通史陳列 [Comprehensive Chinese historical exhibition] (Beijing: Chaohua chubanshe, 1998), 103; see also Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 252.
- 4 See Luo Feng, "Sui-Tang jian Zhongya liuchuan Zhongguo zhi huxuan wu" 隋唐間中亞流傳中國之胡旋舞 [The Sogdian whirl: A Central Asian dance in Sui-Tang China], in *Hu Han zhi jian – "sichou zhi lu" yu xibei lishi kaogu* [Between Han and non-Han: The "Silk Road" and northwestern historical archaeology] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004), 280–98.
- 5 Marc Samuel Abramson, "Deep Eyes and High Noses: Physiognomy and the Depiction of Barbarians in Tang China," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo and Don J. Wyatt (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 127–28.
- 6 Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 253.
- 7 Yan Zhitui, *Yanshi jia xun* 顏氏家訓 [Mr. Yan's family instructions], ed. Zhonghua shuju bianji bu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996 repr. of 1993 edition), *juan* 1, p. 21.
- 8 Albert Dien, "A New Look at the Xianbei and their Impact on Chinese Culture," in *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China*, ed. George Kuwayama (Los Angeles: LACMA, 1991), 41.
- 9 In theory it would be possible to trace the date of first appearance of instruments of this type from a point of origin in Western Asia through Central Asia to China; it would be a classic archaeological diffusion study. In practice, most of the evidence for this diffusion is lost, because of the perishable nature of the instruments and the nearly two millennia that have passed since this occurred.
- 10 Charlotte Jirousek, "Ottoman Influences in Western Dress," in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, ed. S. Faroqhi and C. Neumann (Istanbul: Eren Publishing, 2005), 242.
- 11 Ibid., 242–43.
- 12 These are more conventionally referred to as "donor figures" but as they do not only represent the donors, but also members of the donors' families, including deceased relatives to whose benefit the works are dedicated, I use "worshippers" as a more inclusive term.
- 13 I do not mean this to be a comprehensive survey of clothing styles in the Han, but only by way of pointing out some general trends as background to the Northern and Southern Dynasties material. For more information on Han dress, see among others Shen Congwen, *Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu: zeng ding ben* 中國古代服飾研究: 增訂本 [Studies of ancient Chinese dress: Revised edition] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1997), 107–165; Huang Nengfu and Chen Juanjuan, *Zhongguo fuzhuang shi* 中國服裝史 [A history of Chinese dress] (Beijing: Zhongguo luyou chubanshe, 2001), 81–126.
- 14 There are many examples, particularly among the tomb figurines found in Sichuan province. See, for instance, Jessica Rawson, *Mysteries of Ancient China: New Discoveries from the Early Dynasties* (New York: George Braziller, 1996), 211, cat. no. 113, a figurine of a farmer with a spade.

Fig. 116.1, on p. 215, is a rubbing of a tomb tile depicting a rice harvest, in which the farmers wear trousers or leggings.

- 15 For example, see the Liang dynasty sculptures found at the Xi'an Road excavations in Chengdu: Watt et al., *China: Dawn of a Golden Age*, 227; see also the tomb tiles from Dengxian, 214–15, and various tomb figurines in the same chapter.
- 16 Watt et al., *China: Dawn of a Golden Age*, 26.
- 17 This is not to say, however, that southern dress was somehow a pure continuation of the Han tradition, uninfluenced by the North; for example, it has been suggested that official southern court robes were influenced by northern styles: Katherine R. Tsiang, "Changing Patterns of Divinity and Reform in the Late Northern Wei," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 2 (2002), 233. That said, it seems likely that the wrap robe with wide sleeves was understood as an indigenous Chinese-derived style in both North and South, for reasons suggested below.
- 18 For an archaeological survey of images of the Xianbei, see Dien, "A New Look at the Xianbei," as well as Shing Müller, "The Nomads of the Fifth Century: The Tuoba Xianbei," in *Nomads, Traders and Holy Men Along China's Silk Road*, ed. Annette Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, *Silk Road Studies* 7 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2002), 33–44.
- 19 Sergey A. Yatsenko, "The Late Sogdian Costume (the 5th–8th cc. AD)," in *Ēran ud Anērān: Studies presented to Boris Ilich Marshak on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. M. Compareti, P. Raffetta, and G. Scarcia, *Transoxiana Webfestschrift Series I* (2003), <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/yatsenko.html> (accessed August 17, 2006).
- 20 For a summary of Gaozu's sinicizing edicts of 494–6, see W. J. F. Jenner, *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsuan-chih and the Lost Capital (493–534)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 58ff.
- 21 Tsiang, "Changing Patterns of Divinity," 233.
- 22 I am setting aside here the case of the stone Maitreya stele in the Forest of Steles collection in Xi'an, dated to the year 471, which is the subject of Audrey Spiro, "Hybrid Vigor: Memory, Mimesis, and the Matching of Meanings in Fifth-Century Buddhist Art," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200–600*, ed. Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 125–48. This appears to be a special case, as the clearest gendering of ethnically derived dress appears in the scenes from the "Dipamkara jataka", and not on the figures of the stele's patrons. For Dunhuang Cave 285, see Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku* 中國石窟: 敦煌莫高窟 [Cave temples of China: The Mogao caves at Dunhuang], 5 vols. (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1982–7), 1: plates 114–48. Volume two of Dunhuang Research Institute, *Dunhuang shiku yishu: Mogao ku* 敦煌石窟藝術: 莫高窟 [Dunhuang cave art: The Mogao Caves], 21 vols. (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1993–) is devoted entirely to Cave 285.
- 23 Such overcaps of stiffened or lacquered black gauze are depicted in images of men as early as the Han dynasty, and a surviving example was found in Mawangdui tomb no. 3, from the Western Han. A more contemporary example can be seen in the figures on the interior of Ning Mao's late Northern Wei funerary shrine, dated to 529. Shen, *Zhongguo gundai fushi*, 217.
- 24 One of the four dedications is significantly damaged. However, the close successive dates of the other three (in the eighth month of 538 and the fourth and fifth months of 539) imply that all four are probably a group made in a relatively short span of time. All the inscriptions from Cave 285 are recorded in Dunhuang Research Institute, *Dunhuang Mogao ku gongyang ren tiji* 敦煌莫高窟供養人題記 [Donor inscriptions from the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 114–19, including also a traveller's graffito of 1859.
- 25 Dunhuang Research Institute, *Dunhuang Mogao ku gongyang ren tiji*, 114.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 116–17.
- 27 *Wei shu* 52; Wei Shou, *Wei shu* 魏書 [Chronicle of the Northern Wei dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997 [ca. 554]), 1163.
- 28 Zhonghua shuju, ed., *Er shi si shi renming suoyin* 二十四史人名索引 [Index to personal names in the twenty-four imperial histories] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 780, lists it only as part of several place-names making up titles of the minor nobility in the histories of the Northern Dynasties, and not at all as a surname.
- 29 Yao Weiyuan, *Bei chao huxing kao* 北朝胡姓考 [A study of Central Asian clans of the Northern Dynasties] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1958) does not list either as a known non-Chinese lineage. The surname of the principal female patron in the Yin family group, Shi, may be an ethnonym suggesting Sogdian descent, as in the tomb of the Northern Zhou *sabao*, surnamed Shi, discovered near Xi'an in 2003. This Lord Shi was an official charged with administering the affairs of the Sogdian community in Northern Zhou China, and his sarcophagus is noteworthy for its Zoroastrian imagery. See Xi'an Municipal Office for Archaeology and Antiquities Preservation, "Xi'an shi Bei Zhou Shi Jun shi guo mu" 西安市北周史

- 君石椁墓 [The Xi'an stone-sarcophagus tomb of Lord Shi of the Northern Zhou], *Kaogu* (2004), no. 7:38–49 and plates; also Yao, *Bei chao huxing kao*, 390–391, for a discussion based on literary sources.
- Judith A. Lerner, “Aspects of Assimilation: The Funerary Practices and Furnishings of Central Asians in China,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 168 (2005): 5, also points out that the Tang-era Shi family of Guyuan appears to have maintained its Sogdian identity for five generations while residing in China.
- 30 Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku*, 1: plates 12, 15. These observations were confirmed by a visit to Cave 275 in June of 2009.
- 31 Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku*, 1: plates 171, 173.
- 32 *Ibid.*, plates 182 and 183 respectively.
- 33 Tianshui Maijishan Caves Art Institute, *Tianshui Maijishan* 天水麥基山 [The Maijishan [caves] at Tianshui] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), plates 11–13 show worshippers from Cave 78, dated to the Northern Wei. The male figures all wear Xianbei-style dress. I can find no photographs of the corresponding female worshippers, if indeed there are any in the cave.
- 34 Tianshui Maijishan Caves Art Institute, *Tianshui Maijishan*, plates 47–50 show male and female worshippers in Chinese dress from Cave 76; plate 66 shows figures in Chinese-style dress which appear to be female, but without any corresponding male figures, from Cave 23. These all date to the Northern Wei. Fragmentary ceiling paintings from Cave 4, dated to the Northern Zhou (plate 236) appear to include male figures in nomadic dress and female figures in Chinese dress, but it is by no means clear whether these images should be understood as worshipper images or as narrative scenes from Buddhist scripture. The same appears to be true of the ceiling paintings in Cave 26, also from the Northern Zhou (plates 252–54).
- 35 Gansu Provincial Cultural Relics Workgroup and Binglingsi Cultural Relics Preservation Institute, *Yongjing Bingling Si* 永靖炳靈寺 [The Binglingsi (Caves) at Yongjing] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989), plates 36, 38.
- 36 Dorothy C. Wong, “Ethnicity and Identity: Northern Nomads as Buddhist Art Patrons During the Period of Northern and Southern Dynasties,” in Di Cosmo and Wyatt, *Political Frontiers*, 88 (in her fig. 3.2).
- 37 *Ibid.*, 88–89.
- 38 For an example from the so-called Two Pillars Tomb, see Huang and Chen, *Zhongguo fuzhuang shi*, 135, top.
- 39 Annette L. Juliano, “Buddhist Art in Northwest China,” in Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 130. She does not provide an explanation for her interpretation in the published text, but confirmed it in personal communication (e-mail, October 6, 2006).
- 40 For an introduction to Shuiyusi in English, see Kate A. Lingley, “The Multivalent Donor: Zhang Yuanfei at Shuiyusi,” *Archives of Asian Art* 56 (2006): 11–30. The original survey report is Handan Municipal Cultural Relics Preservation Institute, “Handan Gushan Shuiyusi shiku diaocha baogao” 邯鄲鼓山水浴寺石窟調查報告 [Report on a survey of the Shuiyusi cave temple at Gushan in Handan], *Wenwu* (1987), no. 4:1–23.
- 41 For example, see a male patron from Dunhuang Cave 288 of the Western Wei: Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Relics, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku*, 1: plate 113. See also the figure of the principal male patron of the Gaomi-aoshan cave in Gaoping, Shanxi, illustrated in Kate A. Lingley, *Widows, Monks, Magistrates and Concubines: Social Dimensions of Sixth-Century Buddhist Art Patronage* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2004), 329, fig. 4-12g.
- 42 For more information on the structure of *yi*-societies in medieval China, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, trans. Franciscus Verellen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 259–77.
- 43 The territories of the Former and Later Yan included the area where Shuiyusi is located.
- 44 Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, “A Concise History of the Turfan Oasis and its Exploration,” *Asia Major*, 3rd ser., 11, pt. 2 (1998): 17. See also Yao, *Bei chao huxing kao*, for a discussion of non-Chinese clans of the Northern Dynasties.
- 45 On Zhang Yuanfei, see Lingley, “The Multivalent Donor.”
- 46 Shanxi Provincial Museum, cat. no. 57.7.41. The figures are unpublished, and too eroded to photograph well, but clearly visible on firsthand examination. I viewed this stele in the museum in 2002.
- 47 These images have been published in two consecutive articles by Chang Yimin, “Caihui de paichang: Taiyuan Wangjiafeng Bei Qi bihua mu dakai zhu mushi” 彩繪的排場：太原王家峰北齊壁畫墓打開主墓室 [An extravagance of polychrome: the opening of the main chamber of the Northern Qi mural-painted tomb at Wangjiafeng near Taiyuan] and “Shanxi Taiyuan Wangjiafeng Bei Qi Xu Xianxiu bihua mu” 山西太原王家峰北齊徐顯秀壁畫墓 [The mural-painted tomb of Xu Xianxiu at Wangjiafeng near Taiyuan in Shanxi], *Wenwu tiandi* (2003), no. 1:1–8, and in seven articles by various authors comprising a special issue of *Wenwu* (2003), no. 10.

- 48 Zheng Yan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao bihua mu yanjiu* 魏晉南北朝壁畫墓研究 [Study of mural-painted tombs of the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002), ch. 6, 181–208.
- 49 The Eastern Wei tomb of the Ruru princess, who died in her teens, contains an image of the princess and her ladies, all dressed in Chinese-style robes, but as she was not buried with her husband, there is no corresponding image of a male tomb occupant: Cixian Museum, “Hebei Cixian Dong Wei Ruru Gongzhu mu fajue jianbao” [Preliminary excavation report on the Eastern Wei tomb of the Ruru Princess at Cixian in Hebei], *Wenwn* (1984), no. 4:1–15. The Northern Qi tomb of Lou Rui (near Taiyuan) does contain a double portrait, but it is too damaged to make out details of the male tomb occupant’s dress: Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Taiyuan Municipal Institute for Antiquities and Archaeology, *Bei Qi Dongan Wang Lou Rui mu* [The tomb of Lou Rui, Prince Dongan of the Northern Qi] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), plate 9. Gao Run’s tomb contains the image of a single male tomb occupant, whose dress is unclear, although details seem to suggest he wears Chinese-style robes and his servants, Xianbei-style tunics: Cixian Museum, “Hebei Cixian Bei Qi Gao Run mu” [Tomb of Gao Run of the Northern Qi at Cixian in Hebei], *Kaogu* (1979), no. 3:235–43 and 234; see also a sketch by Zheng Yan in Zheng, *Bihua mu yanjiu*, 118, fig. 85.
- 50 The most famous of these is the Northern Qi tomb of Cui Fen; but Cui Fen’s tomb, located in Shandong, has strong visual connections to royal tombs of the Southern Dynasties, and may lie outside the current discussion. See Linqu County Museum, *Bei Qi Cui Fen bilhua mu* 北齊崔芬壁畫墓 [The mural-painted tomb of Cui Fen of the Northern Qi] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002). More proximal examples include the late Northern Wei tomb of Wang Wen near Luoyang: Luoyang Municipal Antiquities Team, “Luoyang Mengjin Bei Chen Cun Bei Wei bihua mu” 洛陽孟津北陳村北魏壁畫墓 [A Northern Wei mural-painted tomb in North Chen Village, Mengjin, Luoyang], *Wenwn* (1995), no. 8:26–35, and two sets of slabs from stone sarcophagi, also dated to the late Northern Wei, one found in Luoyang and one in Qinyang: *Zhongguo huaxiang shi quanji* Editorial Committee, *Zhongguo Huaxiang shi quanji* 中國畫像石全集 [Complete pictorial stones of China] (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe and Zhengzhou: Henan meishu chubanshe, 2000), 8: plates 72–73 (Luoyang) and 79–81 (Qinyang).
- 51 See, for example, Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Taiyuan Municipal Institute for Antiquities and Archaeology, “Taiyuan Bei Qi Xu Xianxiu mu fajue jianbao” 太原北齊徐顯秀墓發掘簡報 [Preliminary report on the excavation of Xu Xianxiu’s tomb of the Northern Qi at Taiyuan], *Wenwn* (2003), no. 10:17, figs. 21 and 22.
- 52 Shanxi Provincial Institute, “Xu Xianxiu mu,” 21, fig. 29. Figs. 30 and 33 also appear to show female servants.
- 53 Shanxi Provincial Institute, *Lou Rui mu*, plate 57.
- 54 Zheng Yan, “Bei Qi Xu Xianxiu mu muzhu huaxiang you guan wenti” 北齊徐顯秀墓墓主畫像有關問題 [Questions concerning the tomb occupant’s portrait from the tomb of Xu Xianxiu of the Northern Qi], *Wenwu* (2003), no. 10:58–62, particularly 60–61.
- 55 Lerner, “Aspects of Assimilation,” notes 36 and 41.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 21.
- 57 Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, “Cultural Crossroads: Central Asian and Chinese Entertainers on the Miho Funerary Couch,” *Orientalisms* 28 (October 1997): 72–78.
- 58 Lerner, “Aspects of Assimilation,” 22 and n. 52.
- 59 See, for example, the feasting scene from An Qie’s Northern Zhou funerary couch: Lerner, “Aspects of Assimilation,” plate 1b.
- 60 Lerner, “Aspects of Assimilation,” 16.
- 61 Boris Marshak points out that while Buddhism was a minority religion in Sogdiana proper, it was fairly popular among Sogdians living under Chinese (Tang) rule: Boris I. Marshak, “Central Asia from the Third to the Seventh Century,” in Juliano and Lerner, *Nomads, Traders and Holy Men*, 20.
- 62 For instance, Lou Rui, an active sponsor of Buddhist temple-building and monasticism, was buried in a highly decorated tomb which was more or less free of Buddhist imagery. See Lingley “The Multivalent Donor,” n. 66.
- 63 Excavated from the tomb of Yu Hong (d. 592), Jinyuan, Taiyuan, Shanxi province; Collection of the Jinyuan Bureau of Cultural Properties and Tourism. See Watt, *China, Dawn of a Golden Age*, 276–83, cat. no. 175; and Taiyuan Municipal Institute for Antiquities and Archaeology, *Sui dai Yu Hong mu* [Yu Hong’s tomb of the Sui period] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005).
- 64 For a study of the *szür* which traces this garment through various peoples of Central Asia to the *kandys* worn by the Medes in images from fifth-century BCE Persepolis, see Veronika Gervers-Molnár, *The Hungarian Szür: An Archaic Mantle of Eurasian Origin*, ROM History, Technology and Art monograph no. 1 (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1973).
- 65 Collection of the Miho Museum, near Shigaraki, Japan; see Annette L. Juliano

- and Judith Lerner, "The Miho Couch Revisited in Light of Recent Discoveries," *Orientations* (October 2001), 54–61.
- 66 See Xi'an Municipal Institute for Antiquities Preservation, "Xi'an Bei Zhou Kang Ye mu fajue jianbao" [Preliminary report on the tomb of Kang Ye of the Northern Zhou at Xi'an], *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6:14–35; and Zheng Yan, "Bei Zhou Kang Ye mu shi ta huaxiang zhaji" [Notes on the imagery of the stone couch from Kang Ye's tomb of the Northern Zhou], *Wenwu* (2008), no. 11:67–76.
- 67 Marshak, "Central Asia," 232.
- 68 Shen Congwen (*Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu*, 261), cites several Tang sources which describe the contemporary vogue among women for "Central Asian dress" (胡服), but points out that the same sources rarely if ever describe those aspects of design that were considered Central Asian. In general scholars have tended to address this problem by comparing images of Tang women with contemporary images of women from the Tarim Basin or further west, who are never depicted in tunics and trousers. This has led to the association of certain hairstyles and articles of clothing with "Central Asian dress" (see Shen, *Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu*, 257–59, for one example of such an argument). Unfortunately, this does nothing to explain the extent to which tunic and trousers were still understood as foreign dress. Suzanne E. Cahill, "'Our Women are Acting Like Foreigners' Wives! Western Influences on Tang Dynasty Women's Fashion," in *China Chic: East Meets West*, ed. Valerie Steele and John S. Major (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 103–118, is another example of this sort of issue, with copious literary and historical references to the wearing of "Central Asian dress" but few explicit details of design.
- 69 "唐胡服婦女." See the leftmost figure in Shen, *Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu*, 260–62, fig. 126.
- 70 Cahill, "Our Women," especially 114–16.
- 71 Ibid., 114.
- 72 Ibid., 110.
- 73 Ibid., 114. The original text reads 有衣男子衣而靴, 如奚、契丹之服. The comma between 靴 and 如 in the *Zhonghua shuju* edition reflects the assumption that the second half of the phrase ("like the Xi or Khitan people") refers to both the men's dress and the boots; Cahill's translation preserves the ambiguity of the unpunctuated version, which I also prefer. *Xin Tang shu* 24; Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi, *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 [New history of the Tang] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 531.
- 74 See Irene S. Leung, "'Felt Yurts Neatly Arrayed, Large Tents Huddle Close': Visualizing the Frontier in the Northern Song Dynasty," in Di Cosmo and Wyatt, *Political Frontiers*, for a discussion of the Northern Song construction of the Liao as ethnic other, which the author describes as the "Chinese insistence on an ecological and ethnic divide" (p. 209) between themselves and the Khitan (Chinese, *Qidan*).
- 75 或有著丈夫衣服靴衫, 而尊卑內外, 斯一貫矣. *Jiu Tang shu* 45; Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 [Old history of the Tang] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 1957.
- 76 Thanks to Al Dien who made this point during a panel at the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting in April 2006.
- 77 Suzanne Cahill suggests something like this when she writes that "they [women] may have seen cross-dressing as an escape from limitations of their gender role." Cahill, "Our Women," 114.
- 78 *Luoyang qielan ji* 3; Yang Xuanzhi, *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 [A record of the monasteries of Luoyang], in *Luoyang qielan ji xiaoshi* 洛陽伽藍記校
- 釋 [A record of the monasteries of Luoyang, annotated and explained], ed. Zhou Zumo (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2000 [ca. 530]), 124ff.
- 79 *Shi ji* 43; Sima Tan and Sima Qian, *Shi ji* 史記 [The record of the historian] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1988 [ca. 87 BCE]), 371.
- 80 Abramson, "Deep Eyes and High Noses." This argument was expanded in his book-length study, Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 83–107.

THE SPACE BETWEEN

Locating "Culture" in Artistic Exchange

Abstract

Several late sixth-century stone items of tomb furniture unearthed over the past decade in north China have reconfirmed the role of the Silk Road in facilitating exchange between China and regions to its west. Scholars have identified motifs in the decoration of these tomb elements and linked them to Chinese or Zoroastrian traditions, searched for discernible narratives, or investigated the deceased's ties to Central Asia and service as leaders of their communities. While the individuals buried in these tombs or their ancestors likely hailed from Sogdiana, other features of the objects defy clear interpretation according to artistic paradigms in either north China or Central Asia. The tombs also demonstrate a range of affinities with the traditions of both regions and challenge our assumptions about culture and the coherency of traditions in the context of exchange.

This essay takes a broad view of these stone objects and examines the occupants, tomb contexts, and the diverse representations on the tomb furniture as a collective group. Drawing together biographic, iconographic, and archaeological evidence, together with relevant iconography from examples in museum collections, I reconsider the methods by which these pieces have been examined and demonstrate the varied relationships their occupants had to Central Asia and the local communities they inhabited. I reorient the focus away from distinct markers of one culture or another toward the larger picture that characterizes the complex identities of individuals in late sixth-century north China. I posit a thematic rationale for iconographic choices that transcend affiliation with one region or another and argue that while specific elements may demonstrate affinities with extant traditions, taken as a whole the general diversity of artistic elements and burial practices suggests that these individuals occupied a space between paradigmatic "cultures."

THE TOPIC OF CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION presents itself as an inherently unsettling subject. At its simplest, it presumes the transmission of a thing, an idea, or even a belief system, from one place or space to another. The distance traveled may be short, or it may span several countries or even continents. Exchange generally incorporates a temporal element—a lag time—brief or long, during which a thing or idea traverses the spaces and minds of individuals who transmit the object or rearticulate some portion of it. Exchange can elicit a sense of surprise, in the discovery of a foreign object or idea far from where we perceive its "origin" or place of manufacture to have been. Roman glass (Fig. 1) or Byzantine coins discovered east of the Yellow River in the Central Plains region of China, for example, leave us curious about the paths these items traversed, the hands through which



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Glass bottle, probably Roman, first to third century CE, excavated in Luoyang, Henan. Luoyang Museum. After James C. Y. Watt et al., eds., *China: Dawn of a Golden Age* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 113



2

2
Silver ewer, fifth to sixth century, Tokharistan (ancient Bactria), excavated from the tomb of Li Xian (d. 569) and his wife Wu Hui (d. 547), Guyuan, Ningxia. Guyuan Museum. After Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 98

they passed, and the circumstances, such as trade, war, or diplomatic largesse, that led to their fate buried in the tombs of the medieval elite in China.

On one level, these items are the literal products of exchange, taken from one place to another we remain relatively comfortable in our ability to pinpoint their place of production — a space in which they are likely to have been manufactured or a context in which a motif held a particular meaning to the viewers for which it was likely created. On another level, they act as catalysts for subsequent adaptation, as agents waiting to be transposed or recast via iconographic, formal, or technical means into another guise. One or more of these various elements may find expression in syncretic visions by artisans who borrow them from disparate locales and temporal frameworks and introduce them into new contexts, as is the case with a silver ewer found in the sixth-century tomb of Li Xian (Fig. 2). In this scenario, our instinct may be to trace the process of a motif or shape's alteration, or more nebulous routes of transmutation. This approach is, however, prone to be limited by a dearth of evidence that can clearly map key points of change, or challenged by the improbability of knowing whether the imagery or form was inspired by first-hand knowledge or a portable depiction, or was the product of an imaginative construction, or even misinterpretation. For instance, while the shape of Li's ewer is typical of Sasanian metalwork, with fluted and beaded decoration, the division of the body into large and small registers and the human head on the handle distinguish the vessel from contemporary Sasanian products.¹ Even more startling are figures on the ewer that appear to narrate the story of the Judgment of Paris. Rendered by an artisan unfamiliar with key iconographic details, a scene in which Paris and Helen depart for Troy lacks a ship, leaving Helen's right foot awkwardly dangling in the

air.² But while the anomalous visual curiosities of the ewer challenge our ability to identify an obvious place of manufacture, it is clear that the object itself was not made in China.

How we elect to study these items of exchange remains varied. We might, as other scholars have, explore technological innovations sparked by the introduction of glass to China or track how the iconography on the ewer was transformed by an artisan unfamiliar with Greek myths somewhere between the West and where it was unearthed in northwest China.³ We might investigate the social aspects of exchange and examine the circumstances that led to Li Xian's possession of the ewer. Did his rank as general for the Northern Zhou or his one-time post in the region near Dunhuang, a major stop on the Silk Road, allow him to obtain exotic silver? Or was the vessel the product of imperial largesse, given to him by Emperor Wu, whom he had protected when the emperor was a child? We might consider how the Roman glass and the Bactrian ewer demonstrate successive phases of exchange, from the direct importation of glass or silver made in the west to the transformation of foreign motifs and materials at sites in Central Asia and Asia Minor, and anticipate their impact on local production in China.

These approaches share a desire to locate meaning or to find new meanings for artistic and cultural practices that have, in one form or another, been involved in a network of exchange. Tracing the transmission of an exotic motif, for instance, we can pinpoint various phases — insertion, adaptation, and integration — and we can identify historically specific perceptions of a motif until time erases its novelty, and newer imports displace earlier ones. These methods of approaching the subject also assume various positions, from the perspective of the object, transported or altered, to that of the artisan or patron who was somehow responsible for an image's appearance. By extension, an individual's religious or political affiliations may represent additional cultural variables in the network of exchange, adding questions of identity to an already complex scheme.

Late sixth-century stone tomb furniture found in the tombs of Sogdians buried in north China represent another type of object, which adds a different dimension to this narrative about cultural exchange. We know of roughly a dozen examples that date to the final decades of the Northern Dynasties (386–581) and the beginning of the Sui Dynasty (581–609), from tombs across north China. They take one of three forms: enclosed coffins, open platform-like couches, and house-shaped sarcophagi.⁴ Built in the shape of stone and wood structures common in China, they are decorated using incised or low-relief techniques and bear a host of imagery associated with Chinese, Zoroastrian, or as yet unidentified traditions. This puzzling range of iconography references regions and cultures that span the area west of China along the Silk Road but is incorporated deliberately and elegantly in a new

ritual and visual context — the tradition of Chinese tombs. Unlike the exotic foreign imports brought into China, these locally crafted objects complicate the issue of cultural interaction: what has been exchanged is not simply an object or a (misunderstood) narrative or form like Greek myths or Sasanian silver, but an intangible cultural idea or belief interpreted through the eyes of an individual patron or the hands of the anonymous artisan.

A good number of these stone funerary furnishings were found near Chang'an (modern Xi'an), the capital of the Northern Zhou, Sui, and Tang (609–906 CE) dynasties and, more crucially, the eastern terminus of the Silk Road (Fig. 3). The “Silk Road,” whose routes wove through Sogdiana (Transoxiana — modern-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, was the major artery in the exchange of goods and transmission of religion between China and the regions to its west. Buddhist cave temples situated near oasis towns, such as the famous Dunhuang Mogao caves, are vivid testaments to the diversity of pictorial and sculptural religious art that began to be constructed in this region in the fourth century, and objects unearthed from tombs along the routes testify to the range of silk, glass, and other goods that traversed these pathways in the hands of merchants.

During the sixth century, when the objects in this study were made, north China was torn by political conflicts between co-existing western and eastern courts, each of which lay claim to and sought to unify the two regions.⁵ This fraught political atmosphere, which was itself in no small part based upon conflicting notions of cultural traditions, further complicates our view of the circumstances of exchange.

It is the accretion of many variables — cultural, artistic, religious — along these routes of exchange and their potential transmission to north China that demands a broader interpretation of the stone funerary furniture, to which I now turn. While all of the individuals buried in the large tomb structures had ancestral ties to Central Asia, and these ties appear corroborated by Zoroastrian-inspired motifs that recur in the tombs, the objects continue to puzzle scholars because the diversity of imagery suggests varying degrees of cultural interaction. Some appear explicitly foreign in iconography; others show affinities with local practices; while still others appear to integrate a range of traditions. Moreover, they do not conform entirely to conventional types of funerary structures found in either north China or Central Asia. Extant art historical analyses tend to assign these objects to strands of one culture or another, assessed according to the ethnic, religious, or social “identity” of the deceased, and to gauge their imagery against visual paradigms found in these separate regions. This comparative method can be a fruitful way to identify specific motifs and explicate a few individual cases, but discussions that conclude that the complex iconography thus demonstrates a reduction of distinctive cultural charac-



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Map of the Silk Road from Sogdiana to North China. After Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 22–23

teristics obscure both the constitutive nature of identity and the creativity inherent in the process of exchange.⁶

Excellent studies by historians such as Rong Xinjiang offer insightful remarks on the complexity of the transformation of these artistic and cultural traditions, but focus more on examples with striking Central Asian imagery and on textual sources that document Sogdian communities in ensuing centuries.⁷ Newer tomb finds, also having Sogdian occupants but bearing more locally inspired scenes, complicate the picture adeptly narrated by Rong. Though their iconography is less explicitly Sogdian, these examples deserve to be considered with the other Sogdian tombs and compared to local funerary practices of late sixth-century north China.

My aim in this paper is to emphasize exchange as the distinctive feature of the late sixth century and to see the objects not as deviations from static models, but as innovative constructions created during a moment of heightened interaction. While others have explored religious or cultural features of these items and noted the important historical circumstances of exchange in the late sixth century, this article aims to reconsider these objects through a theoretical paradigm that showcases change as a process that remains constant, but ebbs and flows according to the pace of history.⁸ Specifically, I consider how, given the era's instability, the diverse amalgams of iconography and burial traditions found amongst Sogdian immigrants may be more accurately viewed as active constructions from a network of traditions in an arena that lacked cultural coherency. In times of relative political stability, traditions could be dictated or controlled from a relatively strong cultural center such as the seventh-century Tang court at Chang'an. By contrast, the late sixth century saw no such stability or control, but great conflict and movement with competing regimes stationed at Chang'an and Ye (near modern Anyang, Henan), resulting in a diversity of pictorial representation. By adopting this perspective I do not mean to reject extant interpretations as erroneous, but to reorient the focus away from a discussion of isolated fragments as distinct markers of one culture

or another and towards the larger picture. Instead, I posit a thematic rationale for iconographic choices that do not rely on strict affiliation to one region or another but embody an active construction of identity.

The Stone Furnishings and Their Tomb Contexts

About half of the tomb furniture under discussion here was excavated in the first decade of the twenty-first century; other items were dispersed to museums earlier in the twentieth century, and extensive study has been hindered by their unusual iconography. The following is a list of the items of particular interest to this study, in chronological order:⁹

1. **Incised limestone coffin casing of Li Dan (564 CE)**¹⁰
Provenance: Northern Suburbs of Xi'an, Shaanxi province
Dynasty: Northern Zhou
Collection: Shaanxi Institute of Archaeology
2. **Incised limestone couch of Kang Ye (571 CE)**¹¹
Provenance: Northern Suburbs of Xi'an, Shaanxi province
Dynasty: Northern Zhou
Collection: Shaanxi Institute of Archaeology
3. **Incised limestone sarcophagus (573 CE)**¹²
Provenance: Fujia village, Qingzhou (formerly Yidu county), Shandong province
Dynasty: Northern Qi
Collection: Qingzhou Museum
4. **Carved and painted limestone couch of An Jia (579 CE)**¹³
Provenance: Northern Suburbs of Xi'an, Shaanxi province
Dynasty: Northern Zhou
Collection: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics
5. **Carved limestone sarcophagus of Shi Jun**¹⁴
(lit. Lord Shi; Sogdian: Wirkak) (579 CE)
Provenance: Northern Suburbs of Xi'an, Shaanxi province
Dynasty: Northern Zhou
Collection: Xi'an Municipal Institute of Archaeology and Preservation of Cultural Relics
6. **Carved and painted marble couch**
Provenance: unknown
Dynasty: late sixth–early seventh century, Northern Dynasties–Sui
Collection: Miho Museum, Shiga prefecture, Japan

7. Carved limestone couch¹⁵

Provenance: purportedly near Zhangdefu, Anyang, Henan province

Dynasty: date unknown, possibly Northern Qi

Collection: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Musée Guimet, Paris, and
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne

8. Carved and painted marble sarcophagus of Yu Hong (592 CE)¹⁶

Provenance: Taiyuan, Shanxi province

Dynasty: Sui

Collection: Shanxi Institute of Archaeology

We do not know the tomb occupants connected to all of these stone furnishings. In cases where the occupants are identified by epitaphs found in the graves, I have underlined their names (surname first) as they will be referenced in this article. The marble couch in the Miho collection was looted and sold on the antiquities market, and the piece from Yidu and the couch from Anyang were unearthed early on from their original contexts and lack excavation reports. These pieces are connected to Sogdians based on iconographic similarities.

This tomb furniture dates roughly to the last half of the sixth century and half the examples were found in the region around Chang'an. The rest were found further east at sites in the Central Plains region. Decorated using a variety of techniques, they take one of three general forms: a coffin (*guan* 棺) constructed of six stone panels (e.g., Fig. 4); a house-shaped sarcophagus or "stone chamber" (*guo* 槨 or *tang* 堂) made of multiple slabs (e.g., Fig. 5); or an open platform "couch" or funerary bed (*chuang* 床 or *ta* 榻) surrounded on three sides by decorated panels (e.g., Fig. 6). The enclosed sarcophagi of Wirkak and Yu Hong each consist of a low platform with a decorated front façade and four walls with painted or low-relief imagery on the interior or exterior, and a sloping stone roof. Beams, brackets, and the roof were rendered in stone on Wirkak's sarcophagus, and modeled after timber-frame construction, giving it the appearance of an aboveground dwelling; and four stone pillars inserted into bases supported the roof that extended out in front of Yu Hong's sarcophagus. The couches of Kang Ye and An Jia are not dissimilar to the sarcophagi, with a low platform and decorated base, but remain open structures, with vertical panels lining the back and two sides of the platform. Low, tower-like sculptures frame the front edge of a few of these pieces (e.g., the Miho couch), acting as a gateway to the platform on which corpses have been found.

The majority of these stone couches and chambers are diverse in their assemblage of images, lack identifiable narrative orientations, and vary in their manner of representation. The present discussion will focus largely on the four excavated pieces from Chang'an, belonging to Li Dan, Kang Ye, Wirkak, and An Jia, with com-



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Incised stone coffin, tomb of Li Dan (d. 564), Xi'an, Shaanxi. After Guojia wenwu ju, 2005 *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian*, 125

5
Carved stone sarcophagus, tomb of Wirkak (d. 579), Xi'an, Shaanxi. After *Wenwu* (2005), no. 3, fig. 16

6
Carved stone couch, tomb of An Jia (d. 579), Xi'an, Shaanxi. After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xi'an Bei Zhou An Jia mu*, pl. 1

parisons to the other examples where relevant. The earliest of these stone funerary furnishings, belonging to Li Dan, is the only known example of a coffin containing a Sogdian occupant. It is also the simplest in iconography, with conventional Chinese representations of the four directional animals: dragon, tiger, phoenix, and the “black warrior” (*xuanwu* 玄武) found on the four sides, and celestial representations, stars and the mythical deities Fu Xi and Nu Wa on the lid. The phoenix sits above a rendering of a doorway on the front or head end of the coffin, a trope seen on coffins of the early sixth century in Luoyang and earlier. This panel includes an additional motif underneath the doorway, however: a fire altar, the only motif that alludes to Zoroastrianism. Imagery on Kang Ye’s couch is also incised, with twelve scenes lining the inner surface of the four slabs that surround the back and sides of the open platform. Kang’s couch is also filled with what appears to be conventionally Chinese iconography: scenes of a main male figure (likely Kang) shown in landscape settings with attendants, or seated at leisure under architectural structures. These scenes will be described in more detail below. An Jia’s couch is similarly decorated, but here twelve scenes show a variegated cast of Central Asian characters with long hair and large noses (Fig. 7). And while figures dressed in flowing robes common to north China appear near a Chinese-style palace in one scene, other scenes show a diverse array of figures hunting, banqueting, or encamped in domed yurts and diversely styled structures that are not native to China.



7
Scenes from the An Jia couch. After
Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xi'an*
Bei Zhou An Jia mu, fig. 37

A more sequential arrangement of scenes is found carved in low relief on three sides of Wirkak's sarcophagus. Beginning on the west wall and continuing to the north and east walls, ten scenes appear to chart Wirkak's life from his youth, hunting and traveling amidst caravans and attendants, to his passage over the Činwad bridge and ascension into the afterlife (see Fig. 13). Several scenes, including one on the west wall that appears out of this sequence, contain deities or figures whose identities are still unknown. The front façade has a massive doorway flanked by two guardian figures in high relief. The right and left edges of this front façade are divided into three tiers that roughly mirror each other: at the top, a cluster of musicians play Central Asian instruments (e.g., the *pipa*), in the middle, two figures flank a large carved window with slats, and, at the bottom, a fire altar tended by a half-man, half-bird magus or priest-bird. Additional figural and animal details decorate the base of this sarcophagus

In lieu of a separate epitaph found in the other excavated tombs, an inscription was mounted above the doorway on the front façade of Wirkak's sarcophagus. The only dual Chinese–Sogdian inscription from these tombs, the texts narrate Wirkak's Central Asian ties and his official posts, and conclude with the dedication of the stone sarcophagus (*shitang* 石堂, lit. "stone chamber") by his sons in the hopes that Wirkak and his wife would find eternal peace in the afterlife.¹⁷ The proclaimed eschatological wishes accord with the scenes of ascension into the afterlife, but such a sequential narrative does not clearly exist on any of the other couches or coffins listed here, though they may be organized according to a different pictorial logic. Even more remarkable, such pictorial representations are virtually unknown in Central Asia, despite vivid textual descriptions that narrate the fate of the soul according to Zoroastrian beliefs.

The remaining examples have variations on these general iconographic themes, with further variations in height, technique, and material distinguishing the funerary furnishings. Despite structural differences, the Miho couch and Yu Hong sarcophagus share strong Central Asian iconography and style, and were both decorated in low-relief on marble slabs bounded by a scrolling decorative border. As on the An Jia couch, a host of Central Asian peoples occupy these scenes of hunting, tribute, and banqueting. A few distinct scenes, which have garnered much scholarly attention, will be discussed below.

I have excluded from the present discussion tombs that, though they may share iconographic similarities to some of those described above, did not have Sogdian occupants, or those for which we lack knowledge of the tomb occupant or context. For instance, two late sixth-century coffins offer useful comparisons to the Li Dan coffin.¹⁸ Both bear an incised limestone dragon and tiger on the long panels of the coffin and the inclusion of immortals and landscape details shows affinities to stone coffins from early sixth-century Luoyang. Yet the lids are decorated with unidentifiable creatures surrounded by pearl-roundel designs similar to those found lining the edges of other Sogdian couches, including that of Kang Ye. The iconography of a granite couch uncovered at Tianshui, its tomb occupant also unknown, is more varied than the other examples. The panels are considerably taller than the limestone examples such as those from Kang Ye's or An Jia's couch yet bear thematic similarities, e.g., hunting, drinking, and feasting. And while pavilions and landscape settings are present on other examples, the compositional rendering of perspective, particularly the angled views of pavilions and winding corridors, appears more sophisticated in these scenes.¹⁹ The presence of innovative motifs on these examples suggests that the adaptation of artistic traditions was not restricted to Sogdian immigrants but was a wider phenomenon that merits further study.

The tombs of the known Sogdians were constructed in a manner consistent with local tombs in north China: single-chamber earthen or brick tombs with long, sloping passageways (Fig. 8). Traces of pigments found on the walls of An Jia and Kang Ye's tombs suggest that they originally had murals, like the graves of contemporary local elites, but aside from representations of guards in the passageway of An Jia's tomb, these painted images are largely indecipherable. On the other hand, the local practice of burying clay figurines in the grave is noticeably absent from all of these tombs except in the case of Yu Hong in Jinyang (modern Taiyuan). About sixteen figurines were found in this Sui-dynasty tomb, the latest of the Sogdian burials listed above. Compared to contemporary figurine assemblages, Yu's group was quite small in number, but the representation of musicians and civil officials is consistent with types found in Chinese graves. The white marble material and lotus pedestal bases, unusual for tomb figurines, suggest an unusual connection to Buddhist sculpture. Four large figurines made of granite have drawn even more attention because they appear to represent Sogdians, with deep-set eyes and large noses, grasping ewers resembling Li Xian's in shape (see Fig. 2), and rendered with several items such as pouches affixed to their belts that suggest that they may have been itinerant merchants.²⁰ While one may argue that regional differences between Jinyang and Chang'an account for the inclusion of figurines in Yu's tomb, figurines were typical of large-scale graves in Chang'an



8

8
Aerial view of tomb and passageway,
Wirkak tomb. After *Wenwu* (2005),
no. 3, fig. 4

during the Northern Zhou, making their absence in Sogdian tombs of the region (especially Kang's, whose couch favored scenes with Chinese-style imagery) an interesting commonality.²¹

The most compelling arguments linking these recent discoveries relate to three features of the graves: their occupants' ancestral ties to regions in Central Asia, the official rank of many of the deceased as a *sabao* (薩寶), a civic or religious leader of a foreign community in the late sixth century, and imagery that alludes to the Zoroastrian religion. These features highlight the deceased's Central Asian connections, even though they ranged from relatively recent arrivals in China such as Yu Hong, who was a debuty *sabao* and from *Yuguo* (魚國), the "land of fishes" or Wirkak, who ascended in office to be *sabao* of Liangzhou (涼州, the region centered around Guzang 姑藏, modern Wuwei, Gansu) and was from the region known as *Shiguo* (史國), to Kang Ye, a distant descendant of a Sogdian king who ruled the region near modern-day Samarkand (*Kangju guowang* 康居國王) or An Jia, who was *sabao* of Tongzhou (同州, modern Dali, Shaanxi) but hailed from Guzang.²² Wirkak's wife, who was buried with him, was also from *Kangguo* (康國) near Samarkand.

Many of these Sogdian immigrants spent a large portion, if not all, of their lives in north China during a crucial period of political instability. China at this time and for the previous centuries was divided into a series of short-lived territories known collectively as the Northern and Southern Dynasties (386–589). The Northern Dynasties included the Northern Wei (386–533), Western Wei (535–556), Eastern Wei (534–550), Northern Zhou (557–581), and Northern Qi (550–571). The successive Southern Dynasties had their capital at Jiankang (modern Nanjing), while the Northern Dynasties ruled from multiple capitals, at times concurrently, in north China, including Pingcheng (modern Datong), Luoyang, Ye, and Chang'an, located across the northern terrain. No fewer than thirty official rulers reigned over the five

northern “dynasties,” including numerous short-lived and puppet emperors. With power and territory changing hands so frequently, rarely did one ruler’s initiative survive more than a generation. The Northern Wei, the longest-enduring dynasty of these centuries, was among the few to leave a legacy of reforms.

At the heart of these political struggles were long-standing tensions between nomadic invaders and local Chinese that began after Luoyang fell to foreign conquerors in 319 CE and the Jin (265–420 CE) court fled south to Jiankang. Numerous nomadic leaders set up small kingdoms across north China and fought for another century, until the Northern Wei reunified the territory under their rule. Leaders from various nomadic tribes lay claim to fragmented regions during the two hundred years of the Northern Dynasties, a time historians call the “era of the five barbarians” [*wuhu shidai* 五胡時代], referring to the nomadic groups that lived in the northern region of what is now Inner Mongolia. Although there is no consensus over which five tribes comprised the “barbarians,” the most commonly accepted include the Xiongnu, Xianbei, Di, Qiang, and Jie tribes. Of these groups of non-Chinese, a branch of the Xianbei known as the Tuoba gradually conquered the competing nomadic tribes and ruled as the Northern Wei. These Tuoba-Xianbei rulers greatly facilitated exchange between north China and the West, but access to trade routes was at times limited as they continued campaigns against the Southern Dynasties and fought against other nomadic groups in the steppe regions to their north.

Sogdian Traces

Sogdians, the people primarily responsible for mercantile activities along the Silk Road’s network of settlements, were characterized as itinerants without a bounded nation. Sogdian trade caravans that traversed the Silk Road could be enormous in size. Official histories record entourages, led by *sabaos*, of over two hundred merchants with six hundred camels carrying over ten thousand bolts of silk.²³ The *sabao*, a term that appears in Chinese sources until the mid-Tang, is believed to have been a high-ranking post for foreigners, but scholars do not agree on its precise scope. One view argues for a secular interpretation of the post, that *sabaos* were political leaders in Iranian Central Asian communities, but that another lower-ranking office, the *xianzheng* (祿正) or *xianzhu* (祿祝), was responsible for religious matters.²⁴ Another interpretation, offered by Luo Feng and Antonino Forte, regards it as a religious post, but also one that involved matters of trade.²⁵ Jiang Boqin’s discussion highlights the notion that the role existed during a period of tolerance and was accorded special status by the government of the Northern Dynasties which lasted into the Tang. He argues that the *sabao* was responsible not only for tribute expeditions that came into China, but also for large settlements of the descendants of earlier Sogdian traders. While scholars disagree on the religious or



9

9
Fire altar above doorway leading into
An Jia tomb. After Shaanxi sheng
kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xi'an Bei Zhou An
Jia mu*, fig. 15

secular nature of the office, they nonetheless concur that the person who held this post was a member of the aristocracy in Sogdian society, or someone who owned more than one hundred servants. It is also clear that *sabao* derives from a term for a merchant leader, which indicated the head of a caravan of several hundred merchants.²⁶ Epitaphs from the graves discussed here link about half of the individuals interred within them to this high-ranking Sogdian post; the remaining individuals either lacked an epitaph or remain unidentified.

The Sogdian religion was an indigenous development of ancient Iranian religious traditions, influenced not only by “orthodox” Zoroastrianism as developed in Sasanian Persia, but also by Hinduism, Manichaeism, and Christianity. The Sogdian homeland nurtured a robust tradition of religious architecture and monumental painting.²⁷ Sogdian religion and its visual culture often unified Sogdians where political or geographic boundaries did not, so it is no wonder that one of the strongest commonalities linking the tombs and therefore the deceased within them are the motifs that reference this religion. Representations of the Činwad Bridge and native deities on Wirkak’s sarcophagus (Fig. 13), or a funerary ritual on the Miho couch (Fig. 12), allude directly to Sogdian beliefs and practices from the perspective of both the deceased and mourners.²⁸ The affiliation with Sogdiana on other stone funerary furniture varies in degree from the explicit depiction of Zoroastrian deities and scenes to more abbreviated versions of motifs that make a more general reference to the region.

The fire altar is the most frequently recurring motif on these objects and appears on each type of stone structure or elsewhere in the related tomb: under the fictive doorframe on the front end of Li Dan’s coffin, on Wirkak’s sarcophagus, and above



10



11

10

Figure of the goddess Nana, Miho couch. After Julianio and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 309, fig. 1

11

Unidentifiable deity, west wall, Wirkak sarcophagus. After Wenwu (2005), no. 3, fig. 33

the lintel of the doorway leading into An Jia's tomb (Fig. 9). The altars are in some instances tended by a half-human, half-animal "magus" or "priest-bird" whose mouth is concealed by a *padām* (mouth cover) so its breath will not pollute the sacred fire (see Fig. 12). But while An Jia, Wirkak, and Yu Hong's funerary structures include additional Central Asian and Zoroastrian iconography, the fire altar incised on Li Dan's coffin and a similar-looking motif on Kang Ye's couch are the only references to Zoroastrianism in their tombs. No priest-bird tends the altar in these representations, and other features incised on the structures mute the allusion to Zoroastrianism. We will return to these two examples below.

Scholars have been able to identify specific deities that explicitly reference Zoroastrianism post-mortem beliefs in a few scenes found on some of these structures. The four-armed Nana is depicted on one of the rear panels of the Miho couch (Fig. 10); while a more tenuously identified Weshparkar appears at the top of the east wall of Wirkak's sarcophagus (see Fig. 13).²⁹ The majority of these otherworldly figures, however, remain either unidentified or the subject of unresolved debates (Fig. 11). Despite our inability to identify them precisely, their larger size, position in the upper tiers of the compositions, and the fact that they are flanked by winged figures, framed by a mandorla, or sit on a lotus base—all conventional modes of presenting Buddhist deities—support the speculation that they are sacred figures.

More conclusive arguments have been made for the identification of two other scenes on the Miho couch and Wirkak's sarcophagus. Their iconography is corroborated by Central Asian textual and visual sources, and in their representation



12

12
Funerary ritual (detail), Miho couch.
<http://www.miho.or.jp/booth/html/imgbig/00001138c.htm>

of mourning and the imagined post-mortem journey of the soul they draw more specific links to Zoroastrian practices. The first scene, on the Miho couch, depicts a priest who wears a *padām* and tends a fire (Fig. 12). Four of nine figures behind him kneel and hold knives up to their faces; others meditate below in a landscape alcove of sorts. Several scholars have discussed this composition, identifying it as a Zoroastrian funeral ceremony, following the exposure of the corpse to be consumed by animals and linking the presence of a dog to the *sagdid* rite, in which the glance of the dog is believed to drive away evil or defiled spirits. Frantz Grenet notes that despite the fact that the practice of face cutting is condemned in Zoroastrian texts it is frequently depicted on Central Asian ossuaries. This detail is further corroborated by murals such as those at Panjikent.³⁰ The second scene, which spans two panels on the east wall of Wirkak's sarcophagus, presents a host of figures and animals crossing the Činwad Bridge over hell (Fig. 13), identified by the heads of monsters capping the pillars of the bridge and among torrential waves below. Other details of the scene depicted here, two dogs and flames found at the lower right edge, are interpreted as guardians of the bridge and the fires that aid the soul to cross it. Grenet and others have identified the two larger figures at the front of the party on the upper left of the scene as Wirkak and his wife, and the rocks above them, which divide the human realm from the deities above, as the "mountain over which the soul ascends."³¹

Within these scenes scholars have noted iconographic deviations from visual conventions in Central Asia, writing that "many details (are) executed roughly or wrongly" because Chinese artisans were less familiar with the imagery, perhaps only given limited instruction by their Sogdian patrons. The domed pavilion found in scenes from the An Jia, Yu Hong, and Miho pieces (see Figs. 7 and 17), for instance, is "characteristic of Sogdian architecture according to the Chinese imagination. However, its details are not Sogdian but combine different, mostly Buddhist elements."³² This recalls the Bactrian artisan's incomplete depiction of the Greek myth on Li Xian's ewer, but it is less certain how knowledge of an original architectural model might have been transmitted and adapted to these stone carv-



13

13
 Āinwad Bridge and unidentified
 deity, east wall, Wirkak sarcophagus.
 After *Wenwu* (2005), no. 3, fig. 43

ings. In Valentina Raspopova's reading of the Miho couch, renderings of costume and posture are described as "mistakes" compared to earlier prototypes. Observations of subtle misunderstandings, compositional compromises, or substitutions of more familiar artistic conventions—characterized as "distortions" by some scholars—tell us that the tomb structures were likely produced by local artisans drawing from diverse sources, and demonstrate how a conventional motif with one meaning can be transformed within a new, and sometimes jarring, context. For instance, seemingly harmless rocky settings, commonly used to position figures in a landscape, apparently evoke "wild distant lands where heroic adventures are possible and dangerous animals lie."³³ While it may be the case that an artisan was unfamiliar with the specific attributes of a deity or other iconography requested by a patron, to describe a single motif as a "distortion" does not explain what the iconography meant in its newfound context, assembled with pictorial tropes of the local Chinese.³⁴ If we relinquish the notion that artistic and cultural systems are closed, and resist evaluating imagery against paradigms in distant regions, then these "mistakes" will stand on their own as the actively constructed innovations of Sogdian immigrants in a newfound cultural context.

Adapted Structures of Stone: Substitutes for Ossuaries?

Isolated inscriptions and motifs found on tomb furniture indicate how these funerary objects may have been viewed as innovative constructions by Sogdians in the north China context. Wirkak's sons built a "god-house" in the hopes that Wirkak and his wife would find eternal peace in the afterlife, but the use of a large

stone sarcophagus in lieu of a small ossuary suggests a radical departure from Sogdian traditions and the adaptation of local burial practices.³⁵ The sons' dedication accords with the content of the imagery (see above, p.89 and note 17) and appears to expand the function of the piece beyond that of a small, Central Asian ossuary to a visualization of a post-mortem journey. Scholars such as Rong have noted that the larger surface area of the stone panels and funerary furniture allowed for the expansion of compositions of musicians and dancers that have been found on Central Asian ossuaries.³⁶

In discussions of the function of these pieces, most scholars recognize that the adoption of Chinese burial traditions by elite Sogdians followed the growing settlements of their people in the Guanzhong and Central Plains regions; but some scholars have focused on continuities between their stone funerary furniture and Zoroastrian practices; others have concentrated on Sogdian acculturation. The former argue that the stone structures naturally took the place of depositing bones in ossuaries (*astōdān*), the normal Sogdian aristocratic practice in Transoxiana. They have compared stone couch-beds and house-shaped sarcophagi, neither of which are explicitly described in medieval Chinese sources, to *daḵmas* (exposure platforms), citing the importance of Zoroastrian proscriptions against the inhumation of the body for fear of polluting the earth.³⁷ The Persian word *daḵma* (derived from Avestan *daxma*) has come to have a more restricted meaning — towers dedicated to the exposure of corpses for carrion birds to consume — but in antiquity could refer to a wide variety of funerary furniture and architecture.³⁸ Carved from the living rock, or built from stone and lime specifically because they are less porous materials, exposure platforms prevented impurities from the corpse entering the ground while carrion birds removed the most ritually polluting element, the flesh.³⁹ If the deceased had disposable income, after the bones were exposed his family members might deposit them in an ossuary (especially popular in Sogdiana) or a rock-hewn tomb (popular in Persia, modern Iran); however, the final deposition of the bones was not religiously mandated and the less well-to-do might simply leave them on the exposure platform.⁴⁰ What was of the utmost importance, however, was that no flesh should come in contact with any of the holy elements of earth, water, or fire. Although the stone funerary furniture unearthed in north China would have prevented this, a fact that could have facilitated the Sogdians' acceptance of this type of funerary architecture, there is otherwise no evidence of continuity with Zoroastrian treatment of human remains in these burials beyond allusions to these beliefs in their imagery. None of the excavated corpses of the Sogdians under discussion here appear to have been exposed to the elements, but many of the graves were disrupted so the corpses were found in varying states. Yu Hong's skeleton was in pieces, scattered in the sarcophagus, under the base, and elsewhere in the tomb

chamber. Li Dan was found still encased in his coffin. Although Kang Ye was also found laid out on the stone couch, he was clothed, and though some evidence of burned material was discovered near the epitaph it appears related to a funerary ritual that involved an animal sacrifice. Clearer evidence of burning was found in An Jia's tomb, but his bones were located in the corridor, not on the stone couch, even though his tomb showed no signs that it had ever been disturbed. These bones also bore no bite marks or evidence that animals had gnawed away the flesh, so archaeologists posit an adapted process of disposal rather than a continuation of Zoroastrian burial practices.⁴¹ Moreover, no small clay or stone ossuaries of the type found in the Sogdians' homeland in Transoxiana have been uncovered in China proper, nor do oasis towns offer much additional visual evidence of Zoroastrianism like the elaborate scenes found carved on the structures in this study.

Jiang Boqin has argued against comparing these structures to ossuaries due to their large size. Direct comparison with archaeological material from Iran and, more importantly, Sogdiana strengthens Jiang's general observations and offers a clear contrast between Sogdian aristocratic burials in the homeland and those in China.⁴² According to Jiang, when aristocratic Sogdians migrated to China, they "naturally dispensed with the use of the ossuary for burial and adopted Chinese style graves." Noting in particular the favor lavished upon foreign artists (such as the dancers and musicians mentioned below), a result of the popularity of Central Asian trends in courts of the late sixth century, he writes, "an inevitable consequence of the large-scale enfeoffment by the Northern Qi of Sogdians and other Central Asians as princes was a noticeable shift away from Zoroastrian sky burials to Chinese-style burials." Mary Boyce noted that despite the prevalent practice of sky burials and the use of ossuaries, some members of the Sogdian royal elite continued to be buried in mausoleums, but whether or not the shift towards Chinese-style burials was a direct result of "large-scale enfeoffment," or how "natural" or inevitable the process is debatable.⁴³

The *Biographies of Royal Favorites* in the *Bei Qi shu* (History of the Northern Qi) record that foreign dancers and musicians were granted high status because of their skills, particularly by the last emperor, Houzhu.⁴⁴ Jiang implies that these performers would have been permitted large-scale Chinese-style burials as a result of their high rank. While textual records indicate the popularity of Central Asian music at this time, the tomb occupants from excavated Sogdian graves under discussion appear not to have been the recipients of this type of imperial favor, but descendants of high-ranking officials of substantive posts. What these records do tell us, however, is that the popularity of Central Asian customs and practices paralleled the growth in foreign enclaves and the rise in the status of foreign aristocrats in the last half of the sixth century.



14

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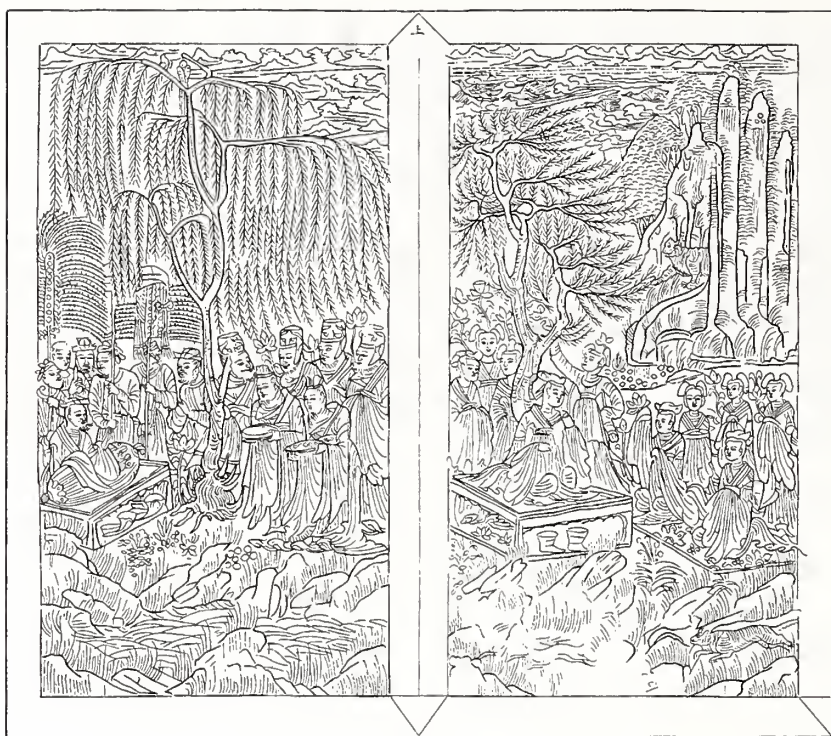
Incised dragon and fire altar, Li Dan coffin. After Guojia wenwu ju, 2005
Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian, 126

While scholars concur that Zoroastrian worship existed in China well before the eighth and ninth centuries (but was propagated orally), evidence of the extent of religious and cultural exchange with local traditions remains dependent upon extensive examination of material culture such as these stone funerary furnishings. Textual and archaeological documents remain vague as to the extent of settlements contemporary with the Sogdian tombs, but two centuries later, Zoroastrian temples constructed in four or five wards of eighth-century Chang'an attest that the religion and its community of believers had grown sizable by the Tang.⁴⁵

Acculturation and Its Limits

Their rank as *sabaos* and the appearance of explicitly Iranian religious motifs such as the otherworldly, *padām*-wearing magus on their funerary furniture make it clear that the deceased maintained certain Sogdian practices, but the juxtaposition of these motifs with local imagery and customs reveals that they were engaged in a cultural sphere that was not exclusively Central Asian. Technically, structurally, and iconographically, these furnishings borrow from an array of funerary traditions to which their occupants were exposed. It is the inconsistent extent to which they adopted artistic and burial traditions of north China that problematizes the notion of cultural coherency.

Two examples in particular, the coffin of Li Dan and the couch of Kang Ye, appear largely indistinguishable from traditional incised stone structures seen earlier in north China. The snaking bodies of a dragon and tiger, two of the four animals of the cardinal directions, incised across the sides of Li Dan's stone coffin make an odd pairing with the fire-altar incised at the base of one end (Fig. 14). And thin figures clad in the billowy robes of Chinese officials set in lush landscape scenes populate Kang Ye's couch, even though his epitaph claims he was a direct descendant of a "King of Sogdiana" (*Kangju guo wang* 康居國王, specifically the region near Samarkand).⁴⁶ The limestone material, the mythical creatures, and the flowing lines immediately conjure up parallels from early sixth-century Luoyang. This earlier tradition of stone coffins and couches was consistent in its use of limestone and imagery of the four directional animals on side panels, at times including large winged immortals astride tigers or dragons and smaller musicians amidst cloud-filled mountainous landscapes. Figures carved on early sixth-century Chi-



15

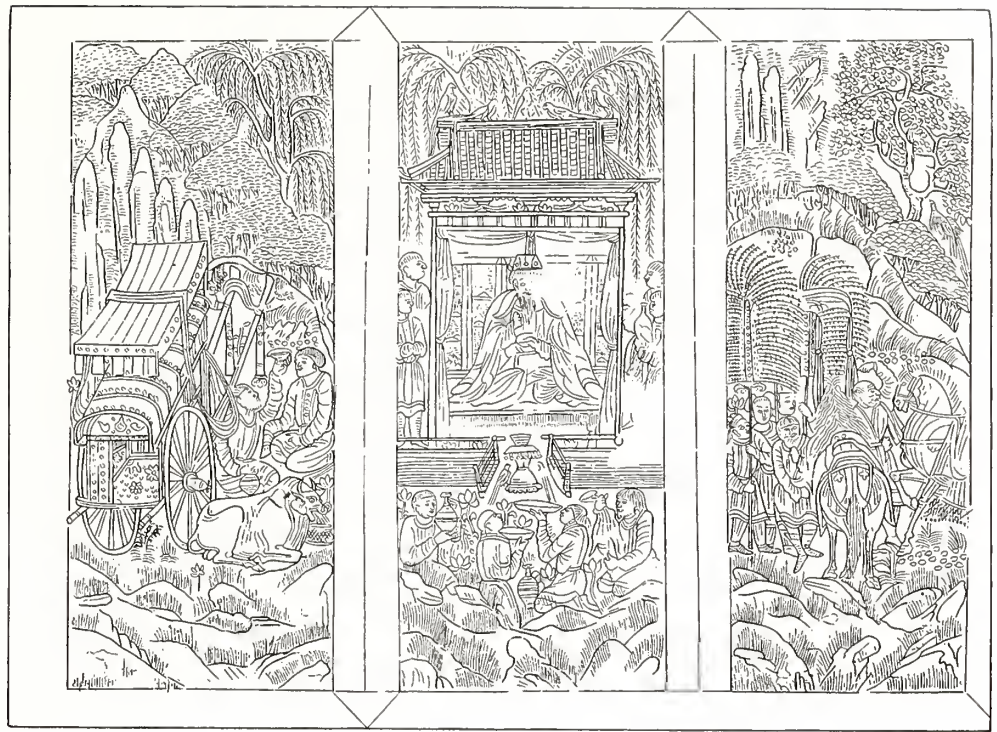
15

Figures in Chinese attire, Kang Ye couch (line drawing of incised stone).
After *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6, fig. 8

nese funerary furniture and Buddhist caves were similarly rendered in flowing robes with ribbons trailing in the wind. These images were either executed with fine, incised lines, or using a distinctive technique in which the background was cut away and the primary motifs left flat but seemingly in shallow relief.⁴⁷

Scholars such as Jiang Boqin also draw strong connections between the construction of the Sogdian funerary furnishings and earlier furniture or architecture found in China, noting that each type—coffin, couch, and sarcophagus—has precedents from the fifth and sixth centuries. Besides the link to Luoyang coffins, the shape of the stone couches resembles the platforms found in late fifth-century pictorial representations (see Fig. 18), and the sarcophagi are not unlike stone chambers from the same era, although with greater technical variation.⁴⁸ Based on current archaeological knowledge, these structural forms continued to be used in tombs of Chinese in early sixth-century Luoyang, but in the later sixth century they largely appear in the tombs of Sogdians.

It is the iconographic representations on Kang Ye's couch, seen against his Central Asian ancestry, that assert a glaring contradiction that is worth further consideration. Groups of figures roaming leisurely in verdant landscapes, the ox-drawn cart, and the riderless horse are familiar compositions featured among stone carvings from early sixth-century Luoyang, alongside scenes recounting paragons of filial piety.⁴⁹ The moral iconography of filial paragons is absent from the late sixth-century tomb furniture of Sogdians, but the incised technique, limestone, and iconography of mythical animals and transport demonstrate a stronger association to China, despite the tomb occupants' Central Asian ancestry. The extent to which these examples of tombs and their occupants adopted "Chinese" elements has been interpreted as evidence of varying degrees of acculturation. Certainly the dress and hairstyles seen in figural representations are not the trousers, boots, and heads-



16

16
Ox-cart (left), Kang Ye (center),
caparisoned horse (right), Kang Ye
couch (line drawing of incised stone).
After Wenwu (2008), no. 6, fig. 29

carves worn by Central Asians as seen on the funerary furniture of other Sogdians, but the long, flowing robes and stiff caps of north Chinese officials (Fig. 15). The accoutrements of attendants and the trees and details of the lush landscape settings also align with those found in representations of gardens and architecture on the Luoyang stone coffins.

The “foreign” element on Kang’s couch in fact asserts a curious shift to representing a new type of foreigner, one associated not with geography but with a lower social status. Figures of a kind described by archaeologists as foreigners, *hu ren* (胡人) are not representations of Kang but of groomsmen and servants who appear in only three of ten scenes: the two with the ox-drawn cart and riderless horse and the scene between them (Fig. 16). In this central scene, a large figure sits on an elevated curtained platform (in front of decorated panels much like the stone slabs on which they are depicted) with a traditional Chinese-style hip and gable roof. Because he is the largest and only figure represented frontally in all of the compositions, scholars have drawn the reasonable conclusion that this is Kang Ye. The other eight figures in the scene are all Central Asian men: a pair of wine-bearing attendants to each side, and a group of four more kneeling below bearing more food and wine. The use of foreign groomsmen seen in the two flanking scenes is not unprecedented in Chinese representations, but in the earlier Northern Wei stone coffin tradition, from which the imagery of Kang’s funeral couch is adapted, groomsmen are not distinguished by such clear foreign physiognomic features as a large nose and large eyes, but dressed like other Chinese attendants. This element of the decoration on Kang’s couch appears to be an updated late sixth-century feature.

The visual pairing of ox-cart and horse alludes to forms of elite transport in both north and south China and forms the core of lavish murals of processions of the later sixth-century. The aristocratic practice of riding in horse-drawn carts

in the Han appears to have been replaced by ox-drawn carts some time after the Han. A passage in the treatise on chariots and robes in the *Jin shu* (History of the Jin) notes that ancient nobles did not ride in ox-drawn carts, but after the weakening of the Han from the time of Emperor Ling and Emperor Xian (late second century CE) officials rode them in certain stages of mourning rites. Perhaps to indicate the growing association of the ox-cart with the wealthy, the treatise also describes a contemporary carriage hitched to an ox with wheels and spokes painted with lacquer.⁵⁰ It is unclear precisely when the ox-cart began to be paired with the caparisoned horse, but visual evidence dates back several centuries and appears in both funerary and Buddhist contexts. As a longstanding convention this trope could take on gendered implications because the horse was generally depicted with a man and his male attendants and the cart with a woman and her female entourage.⁵¹ While all but one of the remaining panels of Kang's couch are divided into male or female scenes of audiences, riders, or processions in forest settings, the ox-cart and riderless horse are shown with no clear gender association. Instead, they are depicted at rest, surrounded by large-nosed groomsmen and attendants who stop to share a drink or assemble around the horse, shown unconventionally from the rear. Flanking the central image of Kang, both compositions appear to refer to the deceased's social position by associating him with elite forms of transport.

One might argue further that the main male figures in other scenes on the couch are Kang as well, riding with attendants and seated at leisure. Scholars argue that the predominantly Chinese style of representation indicates that, following his arrival in north China in the 530s, Kang assimilated to Chinese culture more readily than An Jia, Yu Hong and others who occupied the *sabao* post and came into more frequent contact with Sogdian communities.⁵² Thus, despite Kang's Central Asian ancestry, proclaimed in his epitaph, scenes on his funerary couch render his image in the manner of an elite Chinese. Traces of clothing found on Kang's body indicate that his corpse was not exposed, as adherence to Zoroastrian practices would have demanded. Yet the biography narrated in his epitaph emphasizes his links to Central Asia. He assumed his post following his father's death in 563, and gave his three sons, who engaged in mercantile activity (*huozhu* 貨主), "typically foreign names."⁵³ Archaeologists also note that plant ash discovered in the center of the chamber between epitaph and couch and the presence of animal bones elsewhere in the tomb suggest some unidentified ritual practice.⁵⁴ The presence of a fire altar on Li Dan's coffin may allude generally to Zoroastrian beliefs, but his tomb bears no other detectable Zoroastrian element. Although Li was also of foreign ancestry, his coffin lacks scenes of human activity so we have no sense of how he may have represented himself.⁵⁵

Neither Kang's couch nor Li's coffin bears the priest-bird or Činwad Bridge motifs found on other sarcophagi that reference Zoroastrian beliefs.⁵⁶ Although no priest-bird tends the altar on Li Dan's coffin, the five incised curling lines representing flames or smoke emitted from a basin support the Zoroastrian identification of this motif as a Zoroastrian fire altar. But the identification of a vessel on Kang Ye's couch as a fire altar is more doubtful. Situated before Kang Ye on the steps of a pavilion (see Fig. 16), this small vessel appears similar in shape to the motif incised on Li's coffin, but lacks any indication of flames or smoke. Its religious meaning if any is certainly lost within the larger composition.

It bears noting that the borrowed stone-carving tradition had been popular half a century earlier in Luoyang but, based on current knowledge, was uncommon in contemporary Chang'an burials. It may also be worth considering that these two incised stone examples from Chang'an are the earliest known examples of Sogdian funerary furniture (dated 564 and 571 CE), suggesting perhaps that there was a more limited repertoire of Zoroastrian motifs available to local artisans at this time. While the iconography of these incised pieces makes clear that, compared to other Sogdians buried in Chang'an, Li and Kang eschewed Sogdian imagery for scenes more typical of Chinese traditions, they did not fill their graves with additional tomb furnishings, except a few Roman coins. The degree of their "assimilation" thus did not extend to the practice of interring the body with ceramic figurines or models common in north China.

It is tempting to assert, as others imply, that Kang and Li wanted to identify with Chinese traditions by selecting the limestone coffin or couch, incised stone-carving technique, and fluid figural style. Or that deceased with strong Sogdian affiliations, like Wirkak and Yu Hong, favored burial in house-shaped sarcophagi carved in shallow relief with greater Central Asian flavor. Perhaps there is something to be said for the role material or technique played in limiting the iconographic repertoire from which different artisans drew, since the couch form has been found made of marble, limestone, and granite, and its decoration rendered using incised, carved, and painted techniques. But the presence of the ox-cart and horse on a limestone example (Kang) and also on those with clearer Central Asian imagery (e.g., Yu Hong, Miho) argues that despite stylistic or material discrepancies, select motifs may not have marked affiliation with one region or another, but stood for a feature such as elevated status that transcended geographic bounds.

Aristocratic Pursuits

Whereas the diverse imagery and structural variations of these funerary furnishings reveal a range of affiliations with Sogdiana and China, the theme of aristocratic pursuits unifies much of the general iconography. Some of the most striking

images carved on these stone structures are dynamic hunt scenes, regal banquets, or scenes of tribute set in a variety of contexts and featuring a diverse cast of Sogdians, Turks, and Chinese (see Figs. 17 and 20). Noted for their early representations of non-Chinese figures (and clear signs of interaction between north China and Central Asia), such scenes feature long-haired Turks atop Bactrian camels battling tigers, entertainers dancing the “Sogdian whirl” that would become the rage during the Tang, and yurt-like and domed structures characteristic of the itinerant Sogdian lifestyle. But looking beyond the innovative elements (e.g., a rhyton, scenes of tribute) and the depiction of non-Chinese physical attributes and attire on the figures, the more general iconographic repertoire from which these images are drawn is not that of activities exclusive to the Sogdian elites, but of activities pursued also by their counterparts in China and featured in mural representations of contemporary Chinese, as in the tomb of Xu Xianxiu (d. 571; see Fig. 19). Seated under a canopied platform depicted on the north wall opposite the entrance of the chamber, Xu and his wife enjoy a feast presented by attendants while being entertained by musicians, not insignificantly playing Central Asian instruments such as the bent-necked *pipa*. The ox-drawn cart and caparisoned horse (see above, p. 102) form the center of a procession of groomsmen and attendants on walls flanking the central banquet scene and leading out along the walls of the passageway. A mid-seventh-century epitaph offers a description of what appears to have been a popular convention and the source of such compositions: “There are a hundred family retainers, and the family holds immense wealth (many tens of thousands). They invite their guests and neighbors to great banquets and their carriages surround their gates. They dress in brocades and pearls and have the finest delicacies brought in. Their banquets are accompanied by orchestras, and they ride forth in groups.”⁵⁷

Nearly every one of the Sogdian stone tomb furnishings includes a banquet scene, despite the variation in their cast of figures and religious deities, discernible narrative orientation, or pictorial structure. As in the mural from Xu Xianxiu’s tomb described above, a man and a woman sit under a canopy-like structure with food and drink before them in a scene from the *Miho* couch (Fig. 17). Attendants flank the edges of the space below them and, between them in the center, a man dances the “Sogdian whirl.” Several panels on An Jia’s couch contain a version of these types of activities (see Figs. 7 and 20); Yu Hong’s banquet even occupies a primary position centered on the back panel inside his sarcophagus, set against the north wall of the chamber opposite the door to the sarcophagus and entrance to the tomb.⁵⁸ While details of banquet scenes on the stone chambers or couches are distinctively Sogdian, e.g., the domed shelters or accoutrements, or what appears to be a giant circular rug spread out for Wirkak’s outdoor banquet, the basic com-



17

17
 Banquet scene, Miho couch. After
 Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and
 Merchants*, 298

positional structure—a platform with food and drink, attendants, musicians, and sometimes dancers—can be found on both carved stone objects and painted murals in China.

These types of aristocratic pursuit, like the representations of elite forms of transport discussed earlier, suggest an important link between the traditions of Central Asia and those of north China and a plausible rationale for the conjoining of artistic practices in the tombs of elite Sogdians. Rong notes that in addition to iconography more commonly seen in temple imagery in Central Asia, subjects such as hunting, rites, and banquets were added to Sogdian burials in north China, but that in some circumstances their meaning was altered.⁵⁹ The varying degree to which imagery alludes to Zoroastrian practices obscures the strict religious identities Sogdian inhabitants transmitted to late sixth-century north China, but the depiction of shared pursuits—banquets, audiences, hunting—draws deliberate parallels between the social identities and practices of elite Chinese and Sogdians. The imagery of Wirkak's sarcophagus may narrate his passage over the Činwad Bridge and contain representations of specific deities, but one still finds hunting and banqueting scenes that gesture to his elevated status. Scenes of face-cutting or the Činwad Bridge suggest a direct relationship to Zoroastrian funerary rituals and beliefs, but representations of fire altars appear subdued next to the dragon and tiger that dominate Li Dan's coffin. And they are barely perceptible amidst scenes of leisurely pursuits of men and women with entourages, outfitted in the flowing robes of Chinese elite officials, and the trope of the ox-drawn cart and horse. This pair of images, a marker of an aristocratic lifestyle and found on the Miho, An Jia

and Kang Ye couches, was one of the most recognizable elite symbols among the artistic traditions of north China. They form the core of elaborate processions, as in Xu Xianxiu's tomb, and the frequency of their depiction in funerary and Buddhist contexts suggests that their meaning would not have been lost to contemporary viewers.

"Intercultural" Paradigms

Theoretical debates about intercultural exchange have proliferated alongside modern studies of globalization and its after-effects and in postcolonial critiques of power. Interest in these power dynamics prompted earlier theorists to examine larger social systems and their role in cultural transformations.⁶⁰ They, in turn, have subsequently been criticized for depicting individual agents as powerless and ineffective in bringing about any form of social transformation. These theorists largely engage the contemporary global scene, and such abstractions may be inappropriate as analytical strategies for eras that were nowhere near as extensive in their contacts. Nonetheless, the nomenclature used to couch discussions of premodern cultural exchange has shifted alongside these contemporary debates. Terms such as "influence" or "evolution," previously used to explain changes, have given way to less hierarchical expressions such as "transformation" and "accommodation" in analyses of how people outside an empire came to live within it and rule it, e.g., the Goths in Roman territory, or the Tuoba-Xianbei who moved into north China in early medieval times.⁶¹ Thus, attention to these discussions, particularly regarding how the topic of exchange can be productively reframed, is useful for our investigation of the circumstances of Sogdian and Chinese interaction.

Despite widespread acceptance of medieval China's political and cultural complexity, first and foremost with regard to the Xianbei and Chinese conflicts in north China, scholars continue to interpret features of the stone funerary furnishings as separate components of the overall historical picture. The tendency is to characterize them according to discernible parallels, noting visual or structural similarities; to consider them as alterations of borrowed or adapted motifs; or to speak of them simply as "hybridized" or "syncretic" forms. If we proceed along either of these lines of inquiry, we arrive at one of two conclusions: that all art is intercultural and derived from some preexisting idea or form, or, more rigidly, that very few visual traditions or cultures can truly be characterized by hybridity. Yet these interpretations also shift between perspectives that focus on isolated iconographic features of the objects or on the biographic and religious affiliations of their owners. Terms such as "hybrid," "syncretic," "transformation," or "accommodation" characterize separate components of the larger picture of exchange. The first two refer to the objects themselves, while the latter two allude to the agent or process of change.

Moreover, both types of term or approach become problematic when not given historic or political grounding, and their characterizations are challenged when we begin to ask questions of specific contexts, in which we frequently find exceptions. In contexts with ample evidence these terms may be a productive means to investigate the reception of a motif that is repeatedly reconfigured, but they do not accurately illuminate the salient processes of interaction where, as in the case of our recently excavated structures, there are few examples with diverse imagery and textual sources fail to elaborate the meaning of their assemblages.

We might redirect the problem back at ourselves and ask what we seek in our investigations. What are we examining when we interpret objects of such inherent diversity and complexity? Do we seek knowledge of ancient religions and their visual representations, or do we seek to determine someone's religious, political, or "cultural" affiliations? And how, or through what, do these make themselves known, i.e., what are the visual markers, particularly when the meanings of motifs appear to have shifted in new contexts or assemblages? Does "assimilation" mean that one tradition has been relinquished in favor of another? Or are we moving away from interpretation-related approaches toward questioning how meaning or identity is constructed? In other words, are we satisfied to continue debates about the origin of imagery based on distant cultural paradigms, or can we turn toward investigating what was sought in their innovative assemblage? One approach does not displace the other, but in contexts in which the pursuit of meaning or a dominant or clear cultural referent eludes us, the more productive approach may be to focus not on the attribution of meaning, but on our own historical perspective, so that we reorient our discussion toward the broader processes of exchange.

Jean-François Bayart's work on cultural identity serves as a productive theoretical apparatus to frame late sixth-century north China, and the stone structures in particular, because it offers a compromise to the paradoxical notion of movement and stasis inherent in cultural interaction and acknowledges the tension embodied by a static interpretation of an object from a time of tremendous flux. In Bayart's view, change is understood not simply as an infrequent, dramatic turning point, but as a condition that remains constant, subject to ebbs and flows of varying intensities, or what he has called the "rhythms of cultural change."⁶² Exchange thus unfolds as a dynamic that reveals rhythms of circulation and transformation, which can move swiftly along with events of dramatic historic change, or slowly in eras of relative stability. Such an anti-culturalist perspective asserts that cultures are neither coherent nor circumscribed by political boundaries, and allows us to observe the existence of multiple variables with which an individual might affiliate. These cultural forces are neither contingent on the wholesale adoption of a single "tradition" nor predetermined by the presumption of an inherent quality such as ethnicity.

Expanding upon the notion that culture is not a closed corpus, but marked by a dialectic of permanence and change, Bayart further maintains that culture does not demand a specific political orientation, particularly in circumstances in which ruling entities or structures are not themselves clear and coherent. For scholars of premodern eras to borrow discursive language that frames a particularly charged postcolonial historical context and the modern, globalized economic one appears untenable. Although we can point clearly to paths of exchange in medieval China, parallels between premodern and modern economic systems fall short, both in the speed of transfer as well as in the extent of contemporary nations' global reach. But though the modern notion of a "nation" clearly did not exist in the sixth century, premodern hegemonies nonetheless exerted tremendous power and the perception of dominant cultural strands did exist in some form. For example, official dynastic histories, written predominantly by educated elites living in the capital, generally subordinated or marginalized foreigners, *hu* (胡) in a Sinocentric rhetoric that pitted a dominant "Chinese" tradition against those they deemed foreign; or a cultured or civilized group against groups that were uncivilized, even barbaric. Modern historians have long noted that the term *hu*, a general category that designates non-Chinese, found in these premodern sources has a broad range of referents. For the Northern Dynasties, it typically referred to the nomadic groups from regions of modern Inner Mongolia who conquered north China in the fourth century, yet it has also been used to designate Sogdians and other Central Asians of Iranian descent who moved into this same territory in greater numbers during the following century.⁶³ These exclusivist or relativist cultural perspectives, found in contemporary sources but perpetuated by modern scholars, regarded foreigners as inhuman and incapable of becoming civilized, insisting that transformation of their character was only possible through the adoption of Chinese practices. Such a position on the dynamics of culture presumes not only a coherency on the part of the competing traditions, but an underlying immutability that was certainly not the case at this historical juncture in sixth-century north China.

This uncritical perspective of Sinicization and the inevitability of acculturation that dominated characterizations of art produced by conquest dynasties has largely declined in modern scholarship, and with it has faded the conceit of a unified elite Chinese culture and tacit assumption of its transformative potential.⁶⁴ In its place ethnicity, and ethnic identity, have become a popular substitute with which to frame inter-group dynamics more objectively.⁶⁵ While there is evidence to suggest that the ethnicity paradigm offers useful insight into later periods, when textual sources indicate a rise in ethnic consciousness, in such contexts individuals attempt to assert one distinct group identity in opposition to another.

Marc Abramson's work on the Tang, for example, suggests that ethnic differences assert themselves most explicitly in moments of crisis and in opposition of the ethnic self to the other, which, according to Abramson, meant against both the non-Han and the Han.⁶⁶ One wonders whether Kang Ye was crafting this sort of self-image, as a "Chinese" aristocrat surrounded by lesser-status Central Asians, by including representations of distinctive types of groomsmen and attendants on his couch, and how this played into his perceived relationship to these groups. But while notions regarding distinctive cultural practices and even perceived superiority are present in contemporary sixth-century sources, it appears that it is not always ethnicity or the recognition of an ethnic other that lies at the base of resistance to cultural blending, but political expediency or the desire for social legitimacy. Alternatively, historians of later imperial China have alerted us to the diffusion of perspectives in so-called "frontier zones" and considered allegiances not as they are circumscribed by borders mapped by politics or ethnicity, but by conceptual relationships such as loyalty. Such scholarly trends have not only demonstrated the limitations of the Sinocentric perspective, but they have also reinforced the notion that individuals chose not to identify themselves through ethnic, political, or strict cultural allegiances that were circumscribed by political boundaries.⁶⁷ These recent scholarly paradigms alert us to the diffusion of perspectives within these dynamic zones of exchange, which might be better understood as an intricate, sometimes conflictive articulation of forces, rather than framed using the dialectic found in historical sources. Bayart's approach, however, opens up the subject of inquiry from the static object to the subject or agent and its social field, not bound by the perspectives we project into it, but actively moving and inspiring in a broader rhythmic network. Given the diversity of artistic and cultural practices assembled on the stone funerary furniture of An Jia, Wirkak, and other Sogdian immigrants, their tombs must be examined through this broader lens.

Unlike the Tang, the Northern Dynasties did not endure under a single ruling house long enough for a central authority to dictate enduring cultural trends. While Emperor Xiaowen's reforms of the Taihe era (477–499 CE) were successful in many respects, the collapse of the Northern Wei by the 530s disrupted their momentum. In late sixth-century north China, while it may be said that Wirkak, An Jia, or Yu Hong drew links to Sogdian communities by adopting Zoroastrian motifs on their funerary structures and proclaiming ancestors in Central Asia in their epitaphs, they did not, at this historical juncture, attempt to draw a boundary between their Sogdian ties and the local cultural practices in Chang'an or Jinyang. In fact, scenes of aristocratic pursuits established a common social bond to other elites in north China.

The Myth of Coherent Cultures

Bayart's paradigm of the rhythms of cultural exchange asserts itself as a more appropriate analytical model for the tomb furniture most convincingly because the network of interaction at the close of the Northern Dynasties had expanded far beyond the already complex dialectic of Chinese and Tuoba-Xianbei. Neither Sogdiana nor north China were circumscribed by stable political boundaries in the sixth century, and "culture" existed in even less of a coherent, static form within these geographic regions (see Fig. 3). Given the arid, desert landscape of Central Asia and the western frontier of north China, it is a wonder that exchange ever took place, yet material remains and correspondence from as early as the fourth century tell us that monks and merchants braved the desert in caravans, stopping to rest in oasis towns and writing to report back to their masters who lived in Sogdiana. A letter written to Samarkand in 311 is evidence of how individual merchants served as local agents or regional representatives. In this, arguably the most famous of the Sogdian letters, the author writes of the fate of some of his compatriots on trade missions further east in China, when the Xiongnu were raiding north China.⁶⁸

While Persians, Syrians, Indians, and others were engaged in trade along the Silk Road, oasis towns facilitated the commercial network of the Sogdians, whom the Chinese referred to as a "merchant race" and were said to have gone "wherever profit was to be made" according to one medieval historian.⁶⁹ But Sogdians were not only transporting their products, which served as sources of innovative artistic ideas; they were themselves also the transmitters of ideas, services, and traditions. Sogdian was the primary language along the Silk Road, but these traders were conversant in many other languages, they were literate, and could thus also function as translators.

Sogdiana was not a unified political entity, but rather a loose confederation of city-states, including Samarkand and Bukhara, run by local princes. Politically the Sogdian city-states were semi-autonomous, yet the people were subjected to invasions and dominated by a successive series of overlords to whom the princes owed their allegiance. Although warfare impacted the ability of goods to be moved swiftly along the network of Silk Road trade routes, the various overlords regarded it in their best interest to permit and support commerce in these regions by defending caravans. From the fifth to seventh centuries, these overlords were the Hephthalites and Turks, and until the mid-sixth century Sogdians were the dominant mercantile force on the overland route across Central Asia, since they were ideally situated to establish a vast trade network.⁷⁰ These factors — the broad geographic expanse of the Sogdian network, the itinerant nature of their mercantile commerce, and their domination by a succession of overlords in the Central Asian terrain — argues against stability and the existence of any coherent cultural tradition.

The political situation in north China at this time was even more fraught. Here the issue was not the lack of a central state or the existence of rival overlords, but the collision of several competing groups of Chinese and non-Chinese (e.g., the Xianbei), and rulers' different attitudes towards traditions of the Chinese past. Compared to the relative stability of the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and Tang dynasties, rampant instability characterized the centuries between these two “golden ages.”

The cultural make-up of this tumultuous sphere was as inconsistent and variegated as its politics. Not only did aspiring nomads move into north China and clash with the Chinese who remained under their new regime, but the Northern Wei rulers also forcibly transported large populations from western and eastern regions of their conquered territory into their new capital at Pingcheng to mix with the already diverse inhabitants. Traditions thus intermingled throughout the fifth and sixth centuries as political groups continued to fight and territories were reconfigured. As such, the Xianbei and Chinese already represented two competing strands of artistic and cultural practice in north China at this time, even though the adoption of these strands by the general populace was by no means simple or one-sided.

Culturally, as well as politically, these northern areas, into which the Sogdians later moved and where they were buried, witnessed tremendous upheaval during the fourth to sixth centuries (see above, p. 91–92). Buddhism was introduced to China and adopted by the Northern Wei court, nomadic and Chinese traditions (e.g., language, costume) intermingled, and the ruling nomadic elite married members of wealthy “Great Families,” groups of Chinese who remained in the north and the supposed bastions of ancient Chinese traditions. These traditions endured in some form in the north or were adopted from contact with Chinese who fled to Jiankang and established the Southern Dynasties. They were even actively revived and implemented by aspiring Northern Dynasties emperors such as Xiaowen in his famed late fifth-century reforms, leading to the fluid style visible in the early sixth-century Luoyang tradition of stone carvings. But the collision of these efforts with innovative institutions such as Buddhism necessarily cast them in a new light. The very notion of “Chinese” identity and culture was thus redefined several times over in the hundred years before the Sogdians arrived in the sixth century.

We can see shifting notions of “convention” in a comparison of imagery from a tomb at Zhijiabao in the late fifth-century capital Pingcheng and that of the general Xu Xianxiu of the late sixth century at Jinyang.⁷¹ In a painted scene on the north wall of a stone sarcophagus from Zhijiabao (Fig. 18), the deceased and his wife sit on a low platform dressed in nomadic garb, including the characteristic long, fastened headscarf, trousers, and boots. Flanked by attendants, and by the ox-drawn cart and horse on the east and west walls, their images are awkwardly inserted into



18

18

Couple seated on a dais, north wall of stone funerary chamber, Zhijiabao, late fifth century (line drawing of painted stone). After *Wenwu* (2001), no. 7, fig. 6

pictorial conventions adopted by aspiring late fifth-century Northern Wei officials, who appropriated Chinese tropes in order to lend them authority in the eyes of their newly conquered subjects. A century later in murals that decorate the four walls of Xu's chamber, husband and wife are shown seated on a platform (Fig. 19), surrounded by attendants and musicians and an expanded repertoire of figures. An ox-drawn cart and horse, the same pairing found on the stone furniture, extend the composition to the flanking walls. The core imagery remains the same but fashionable dress has changed with the times. Female musicians wear newly styled headgear and robes with the pearl-roundel patterns then popular on Central Asian textiles. Men's trousers and caps appear to be updated nomadic garb. But what is missing from the narrative of change framed by the imagery in these two tombs is that in the decades between them inhabitants of north China fought viciously over whether to continue the Chinese traditions initiated in the late fifth-century reforms or to renounce them for something else. At opposing ends of the conflict were Xianbei nobles at Luoyang who had adopted Chinese traditions and commanders stationed in northern garrisons who retained nomadic customs. This conflict has been viewed as emblematic of the divide between Sinicizing and nomadic trends, but the loss of high status, privilege, and advancement for military families and other factors fueled the hostilities between the two regions. Garrison rebellions erupted in 523 and culminated in the slaughter of the royal family in 528 CE (the "Heyin massacre").⁷²

Within the Central Plains region occupied by the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi, the majority of large-scale tombs known to us exhibit non-nomadic artistic trends. Jinyang, however, was a military stronghold occupied by officials who favored abandoning reform. While not necessarily advocating a return to nomadic practices, they did represent a faction made up of former rebels.⁷³ Despite the repopularization of nomadic costume for men in the Central Plains region, and whether or not this attire may be perceived as a deliberate assertion of an "ethnic identity," this identity was not reappropriated in women's fashions, which bore features of the "newly foreign" Central Asian aspects of the late sixth century, e.g. pearl roundel textile designs and hairstyles.⁷⁴ Even in the relatively more circumscribed territory



19

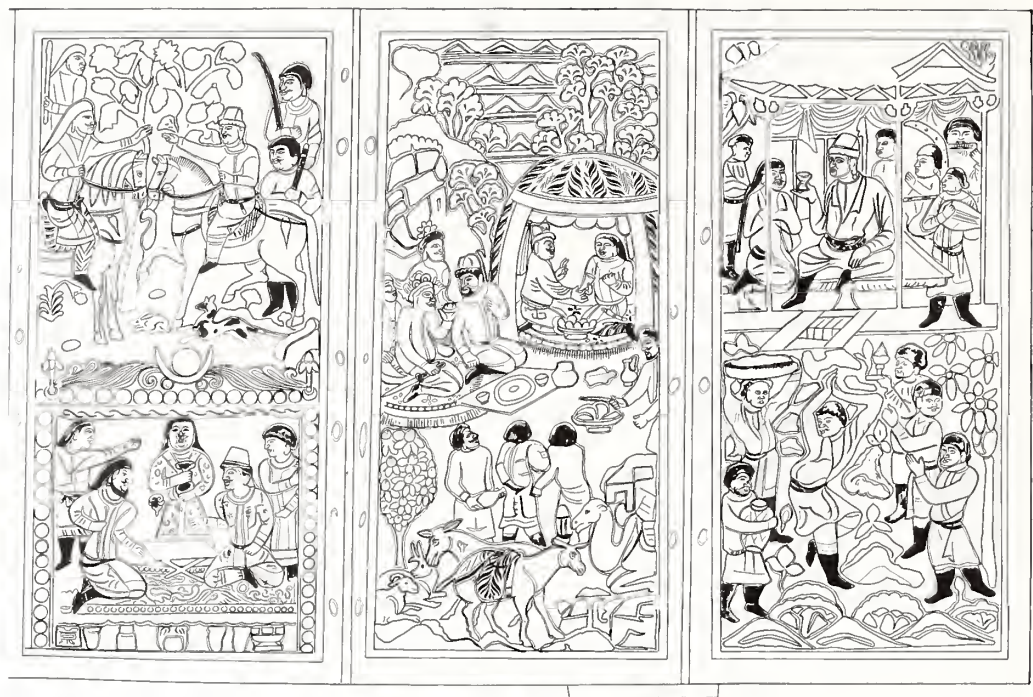
19
Banquet scene, north wall of tomb of
Xu Xianxiu (d. 571), Taiyuan, Shanxi.
After *Wenwu Tiandi* (2003), no. 1:2

of northeast China, artistic and cultural traditions were being reshaped. The addition of Sogdian practices to this mix only contributed to its complexity.

Postscript: A Revised Perspective

While we may see hybridity, appropriated techniques, or a fusion of motifs and structures in the late sixth-century Sogdian stone tombs, this might not have been the case for the deceased or their survivors. To borrow a phrase from Bayart, “we identify ourselves less with respect to membership in a community or a culture than with respect to the communities and cultures with which we have relations.”⁷⁵ One consequence of overestimating the coherence of cultural traditions, Sogdian or Chinese, and continuing to interpret the components assembled in the tombs according to these closed cultural categories, is that linkages—inherent in the invention of traditions or in the construction of identity, and the possibility of multiple identities—are concealed. The diversity of imagery, variations in construction, and inconsistent degrees to which the tombs make cultural or religious references, speaks to the need to refine our approaches.

Frantz Grenet has astutely observed that Sogdians rarely depicted themselves engaged in the very activity for which they are best known: commerce. This he contrasts with their image in the eyes of the Chinese, who represent Sogdians engaged in activities such as traveling with horses, in caravans, or trading in wine.⁷⁶ An Jia’s funerary couch is covered with images of encounters between diverse peoples in structures such as a tent or pavilion that suggest settings in both China and Central Asia.⁷⁷ He himself, the lone recurring figure in a short white cap, is presented dining and interacting with figures who, according to hairstyle, dress, and the architectural setting, are identifiable as Turks and Chinese (Fig. 20).



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Audience and encampment scenes,
An Jia couch (line drawing of carved
and painted stone). After Shaanxi
sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xi'an Bei*
Zhou An Jia mu, fig. 24 and pl. 57

If we separate the imagery from these fascinating stone structures into distinct cultural strands and view them as embodying the tension between distinct traditions, we may overlook the process of exchange and innovation taking place. We may also miss the self-image that An was constructing through this assemblage of disparate elements in relation to the plurality of cultural repertoires available to him and his descendants during the late sixth century. Rather than identifying him as the inheritor of one “coherent” culture or another, we may see him instead as exposed to an increasingly diverse set of cultural variables. An’s identity as a merchant or intermediary between diverse groups is highlighted by this relational aspect. Adopting this view of identity and of these funerary furnishings as produced relationally, from a network of artistic forms, acknowledges the reconfiguration of traditions in late sixth-century north China as an act of originality. It further reveals An’s role as a facilitator between the disparate groups with which he had contact rather than as a member of one group or another. It is a vision that allows us to see individuals occupying a space situated in the colliding networks of late sixth-century north China, affiliating with multiple cultural spheres, and more accurately portrays their place in a space between.

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NOTES

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- 1 See Jessica Rawson, "Central Asian Silver and Its Influence on Chinese Ceramics," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 5 (1991): 139–51; and eadem, *The Ornament on Chinese Silver of the Tang Dynasty*, British Museum Occasional Paper 40 (London: British Museum, 1982). For an example of an Iranian silver vessel found in a tomb, and an entry point into the foundational literature, see Prudence O. Harper, "An Iranian Silver Vessel in the Tomb of Feng Hutu," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 4 (1990): 51–59. For the larger phenomenon of importation and incorporation of Sasanian luxury goods into Chinese visual culture, see the article by Matthew Canepa, "Distant Displays of Power: Understanding Cross-Cultural Interaction among the Elites of Rome, Sasanian Iran, and Sui-Tang China," in this volume.
- 2 For an iconographic study, see Annette Juliano and Judith Lerner, eds., *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China, Gansu and Ningxia, 4th–7th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams and Asia Society, 2001), 99–100, particularly the detail in fig. 31c; and Luo Feng, *Hu Han zhi jian* (Wenwu chubanshe, 2004), 79–99. The original report is published by Ningxia Huizu zizhiqu bowuguan and Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan, "Ningxia Guyuan Bei Zhou Li Xian fufu mu fajue jianbao," *Wenwu* (1985), no. 11:1–20.
- 3 Li Xian's ewer was likely produced in Bactria: Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 99–100.
- 4 The modern Chinese term for these items, *zangju* (葬具), refers collectively to large tomb furniture.
- 5 The Northern Zhou finally succeeded in conquering the Northern Qi, based at Ye, in 577, only to have the throne seized by Yang Jian four years later. Yang's newly founded Sui dynasty then proceeded to conquer the Chen dynasty and reunify north and south for the first time in centuries. The specific political context will be outlined below.
- 6 E.g., Luo Feng in Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 244.
- 7 See Rong Xinjiang, "Sute Xianjiao meishu dong chuan guocheng zhong de zhuanhua—cong Sute dao Zhongguo" in Wu Hung, ed., *Between Han and Tang: Cultural and Artistic Interaction in a Transformative Period* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2001), 51–67, also collected in his *Zhongguo Zhongguo yu wailai wenming* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2001), 301–25.
- 8 This paradigm will be discussed below but stems from Jean-Francois Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- 9 References to specific stone material (limestone, granite, marble) are derived from the excavation reports. The "marble" used for the Yu Hong and Miho museum examples is a soft, creamy white marble (汉白玉) common to the Shanxi region and used also for Buddhist sculptures. Additionally, pigment on some examples (e.g., the sarcophagi of Wirkak and Yu Hong) suggests they were also painted but to what extent is no longer discernible. There is an extensive range of sources on these structures by scholars of varying

- disciplines, with greater interest being shown in those that bear the more distinct Central Asian iconography. Among general studies, Jiang Boqin's *Zhongguo Xianjiao yishi shi yanjiu* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004) provides summaries and references for the Anyang, Miho, and An Jia couches, as well as the sarcophagus of Yu Hong and the example from Yidu. The collection of papers edited by Etienne de la Vaissière and Eric Trombert, *Les Sogdiens en Chine* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2005) offers diverse studies of Sogdian history and material culture, as does Rong Xinjiang's excellent *Zhongguo zhongguo yu wailai wenming* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2001). See also the very useful review of this and Etienne de la Vaissière, *Histoire des marchands Sogdiens* (Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 2002) by Valerie Hansen, "New Work on the Sogdians, the Most Important Traders on the Silk Road, A.D. 500–1000," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003): 149–161. Vaissière's study has been translated by James Ward as *Sogdian Traders: A History* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). Since my interest lies in considering these tombs as a group rather than a comprehensive discussion of each, I list here only the primary reports and major studies of the individual examples.
- 10 A report on the Li Dan coffin is not yet available, but see Guojia wenwu ju, ed., 2005 *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), 123–28.
 - 11 Xi'an shi wenwu baohu kaogusuo, "Xi'an Bei Zhou Kang Ye mu fajue jianbao," *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6: 14–35.
 - 12 See Xia Mingcai, *Wenwu* (1985), no. 10:49–54; *Wenwu* (2001), no. 5:92–93; and the study by Zheng Yan, "Qingshou Bei Qi huaxiangshi yu ru Hua Sute ren mei-shu — Yu Hong mu deng kaogu xin faxian de qishi," in Wu Hung, *Between Han and Tang*, 73–106.
 - 13 Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Xi'an Bei Zhou An Jia mu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2003).
 - 14 For Wirkak's (Shi Jun) sarcophagus see Xi'an shi wenwu baohu kaogusuo, "Xi'an Bei Zhou Liangzhou Sabao Shi Jun mu fajue jianbao," *Wenwu* (2005), no. 3:4–33. I chose to use the Sogdian name Wirkak rather than the cumbersome Shi Jun or literal English "Lord Shi," but Shi Jun is the name used in Chinese sources.
 - 15 See the early study by Gustina Scaglia, "Central Asians on a Northern Ch'i Gate Shrine," *Artibus Asiae* 21 (1958), no. 1:9–28.
 - 16 Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Taiyuan Sui Yu Hong mu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005).
 - 17 On these inscriptions, which are largely identical in content, see Sun Fuxi, "Investigations on the Chinese Version of the Sino-Sogdian Bilingual Inscription of the Tomb of Lord Shi," in Vaissière and Trombert, *Les Sogdiens en Chine*, 47–55; and Yutaka Yoshida, "The Sogdian Version of the New Xi'an Inscription," *ibid.*, 57–72.
 - 18 See Shaanxi sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, "Shaanxi sheng Sanyuan xian Shuangsheng cun Sui Li He mu qingli jianbao," *Wenwu* (1966), no. 1:27–42; Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, "Shaanxi Tongguan Shuicun Sui dai bihua mu xianke shiguan," *Wenwu yu kaogu* (2008), no. 3:33–47; and Li Ming, "Tongguan Shuicun Sui dai bihua mu shiguan tuxian shidu," *ibid.*, 48–52.
 - 19 See Tianshui shi bowuguan, "Tianshui shi faxian Sui Tang pingfeng shi guanchuang mu," *Kaogu* (1992), no. 1:46–54; and Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 304–308. Additional examples, such as a couch displayed at the Musée Guimet in 2004–5 and a piece that resembled Kang Ye's couch discovered near Zhengzhou in 2007 offer further examples but thus far lack extensive publications. Scenes from the Guimet example are examined in Frantz Grenet, "Religious Diversity among Sogdian Merchants in Sixth-century China: Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Hinduisim," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 27 (2007), no. 2:463–78; see also Catherine Delacour and Pénélope Riboud, *Lit de Pierre, sommeil barbare: Présentation, après restauration et remontage, d'une banquette funéraire ayant appartenu à un aristocrate d'Asie centrale venu s'établir en Chine au VI^e siècle* (Paris: Musée Guimet, 2004).
 - 20 See Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Taiyuan Sui Yu Hong mu*, 49–85, particularly 55–60 and figs. 87–93. The tomb containing the Tianshui couch also contained figurines of musicians (see note 19).
 - 21 Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xi'an Bei Zhou An Jia mu*, 16.
 - 22 Kang occupied a post described on his epitaph as *datianzhu* (大天主) that is not listed in textual sources, but which archaeologists relate to a three-tier Sogdian rank akin to a prince or leader of a community and to the *xianzhu* (祇主); see note 24. The precise relationship between this post and the *datianzhu* remains unclear. See *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6:34.
 - 23 See the entry on the Tuyuhun (吐谷渾) in *Zhou shu* (History of the Zhou), *juan* 50:913, which records that in 553 CE, Shi Ning 史寧 Governor of Liangzhou 涼州 (Wuwei 武威 or Guzang 姑臧) "seized an illegal caravan consisting of 240 merchants, 600 camels, and 10,000 rolls of multicolored silks."
 - 24 Jiang Boqin, "Sabaofu zhidu lunlue: Han wen Sute ren muzhi kaoshi zhi yi," *Huaxia* 3 (1998) (synopsis in *Chinese Archaeological and Art Digest* [CAAD], 2000, 207–208). The term *xianzheng* or *xianzhu*

- refers to a Zoroastrian priest or one who presides over religious sacrifices.
- 25 Luo Feng, "Sabao: yi ge Tang chao weiyi wailai guanzhi de zai kaocha," *Tang yanjiu* 4 (1998): 215–50 (trans. CAAD, 2000, 165–91); Antonio Forte, "Iranians in China: Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Bureaus of Commerce," *Caliers d'Extreme Asie* 11 (1999–2000): 285–89.
 - 26 The term derives from either the Sanksrit or Sogdian *sarthavaha* or *sarthavak*.
 - 27 Frantz Grenet, "Religious Diversity among Sogdian Merchants in Sixth Century China: Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Hinduism," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007): 463–78. For an important study of Sogdian religious architecture, see V. G. Shkoda, "The Sogdian Temple: Structure and Rituals," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 10 (1996 [1998]): 195–206. On Sogdian iconography, see Frantz Grenet, "Mithra: Iconography in Iran and Central Asia," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2006), www.iranica.com. For further bibliography on the Sogdians, see note 9 above and Matthew Canepa's article in this volume.
 - 28 The bridge on An Jia's couch is not conclusively identified as the Činwad Bridge and the scene is typically described as an outing or farewell: see Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xi'an Bei Zhou An Jia mu*, 38–39 and plates 73, 77; Jiang Boqin, *Zhongguo Xianjiao yishi shi yanjiu*, 113; Ahmad Tafazzoli, "Činwad Puhl," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 5 (1991), 594–95; Mary Boyce, "Death among Zoroastrians," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 7 (1996), 171. Compare medieval and contemporary Zoroastrian funerary and commemorative ritual: Firoze M. Kotwal and Jamsheed K. Choksy, "To Praise the Souls of the Deceased and the Immortal Spirits of the Righteous Ones: The Staomi or Stūm Ritual's History and Functions," in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, ed. Michael Stausberg (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 389–401.
 - 29 Grenet discusses Zoroastrian deities and themes on Wirkak's sarcophagus in Grenet, "Religious Diversity among Sogdian Merchants," 473–74. The link to Weshparkar derives from the tiny trident held by the figure on the upper east wall, and the base formed by three oxen that draws a connection to Mithra, known for having slain a bull, although the deity is generally depicted with three heads. Nicholas Sims-Williams, "Some Reflections on Zoroastrianism in Sogdiana and Bactria," in *Realms of the Silk Roads: Ancient and Modern*, ed. David Christian and Craig Benjamin, *Silk Road Studies* 4 (Macquarie University and Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 1–12.
 - 30 Grenet, "Religious Diversity among Sogdian Merchants," 469. This observation was also made earlier by others, e.g., Judith Lerner, "Central Asians in Sixth-Century China: A Zoroastrian Funerary Rite," *Iranica Antiqua* 30 (1995): 179–90.
 - 31 Frantz Grenet, Penelope Riboud and Yang Junkai, "Zoroastrian Scenes on a Newly Discovered Sogdian Tomb in Xi'an, Northern China," *Studia Iranica* 33 (2004): 276–78.
 - 32 Valentina Raspopova, "Life and Artistic Conventions in the Reliefs of the Miho Couch," *Bulletin of the Miho Museum* 4 (2004): 44.
 - 33 Raspopova, "Life and Artistic Conventions," 47. Some scholars certainly avoid this type of language, which presumes a superior paradigm. Grenet takes a broader perspective and interprets the visual imagery on these stone structures as evidence of religious diversity. Angela Sheng (cited by Grenet, "Religious Diversity among Sogdian Merchants") observed that the date of many of these Sogdian funerary pieces coincides with the Northern Zhou court's persecution of Buddhism launched in 569 CE. Grenet links this with his argument that no explicit Buddhist motifs are to be found amongst the iconography. See Grenet, "Religious Diversity among Sogdian Merchants," particularly 478.
 - 34 Since the panels of the Miho couch were not scientifically excavated, it remains a possibility that they were assembled from disparate pieces.
 - 35 The Chinese inscription refers to the structure as a stone chamber or hall (see above, p. 89) but the Sogdian term translates as "god-house." See note 17.
 - 36 Rong, "Sute Xianjiao meishu dong chuan guocheng Zhong de zhuanhua..." 62, esp. figs. 4–6.
 - 37 Guojia wenwu ju ed., 2004 *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005); *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6:14–35; Shi Anchang, *Huotan yu jisi niaoshen* (Beijing: Cijincheng chubanshe, 2004), 114–16; Mary Boyce, "Corpse," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1993) 6:279–88; Gherardo Gnoli, "Indo-Iranian Religion," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2004), www.iranica.com; A. Shapur Shabazi, "astōdāns," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1989) 2:851–53. Shi links a reference to a "spirit couch" (*lingchuang* 灵床) in the *Jin shu* to a description of Sogdian burial ritual in the *Sui shu*, but the latter passage does not clearly denote an object buried in the grave: Shi, *Huotan yu jisi niaoshen*, 115–16.
 - 38 For the most comprehensive archaeological study of Persian Zoroastrian religious practices, see Dietrich Huff, "Archaeological Evidence of Zoroastrian Funerary Practices," in Stausberg, *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, 593–630; on the inscriptional and archaeological evidence and its bearing on the meaning of *daḡna*, 593–94.

- 39 Mary Boyce, "Corpse."
- 40 Huff, "Archaeological Evidence . . .," 593–94.
- 41 Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xi'an Bei Zhou An Jia mu*, 86–87. The interesting reconstruction of material evidence in the monograph's conclusion is undermined by the general statement which relates An's couch to the other discoveries known at the time. Linking the few objects into a chronology, the authors of the report write that while one sees the wholesale adoption of Chinese tomb structures in Sogdian tombs, elements of tomb furnishings and funerary furniture were later adapted from ossuaries. Lastly, they state that Sogdian tombs were probably indistinguishable from Han tombs and that this type of transformative process also reflects their acculturation. *Ibid.*, 87.
- 42 Following earlier studies of Zoroastrian ritual practices, Jiang noted that, in the royal funerary traditions of the Achaemenids and Sasanians, the "kings of kings" created rock-cut tombs or tomb towers made of dressed stone; Jiang Boqin, "Ru Hua Sute ren de Xianjiao meishu" (trans. as "The Zoroastrian Art of the Sogdians in China" in *CAAD* 2000, 35–71), 63. Scholars of Iranian religion and archaeology have themselves commented on the fact that the royal tombs of the Persian kings would have functioned as monumental ossuaries, shielding the soil from the human remains by encasing them in dressed stone or the living rock: Huff, "Archaeological Evidence . . .," 593–94, 596–602, 609–18.
- 43 Jiang, "Ru Hua Sute ren de Xianjiao meishu," 2000, 63–64; Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); in describing a Sogdian contract (unearthed at Mugtagh, no. 13–8) that detailed the appropriation of a large expanse of land for use as the resting place for a man's relatives, Vladimir A. Livshits observed that this was in direct conflict with Sasanian Zoroastrianism and that the practice was the topic of fierce debate in medieval Persia, *Sogdiiskii dokument'is gori Mug*, Vishusk II (1962), 48; cited by Jiang, *ibid.*, 63.
- 44 See *Bei Qi shu* (History of the Northern Qi) *juan 50 Enxing zhuan* 恩倖傳 (Biographies of Royal Favorites): 694.
- 45 They were built in the following wards: Buzhengfang, Liquefang, Puningfang, Linggongfang, Chonghuafang. See Rong Xinjiang, *Zhongguo Zhongguo yu wailai wenming* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2001), 76–85.
- 46 *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6, fig. 23.
- 47 See Huang Minglan, *Luoyang Bei Wei shisu shike xianhua ji* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1987); Luoyang Bowuguan, "Luoyang Bei Wei huaxiang shiguan," *Kaogu* (1980), no. 3:229–41; and on an early sixth-century stone chamber, see Guo Jianbang, *Bei Wei Ning Mao shishi xianke hua* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1987).
- 48 For example, the late fifth-century painted stone chamber unearthed at Zhijiabao, the undecorated stone chamber found in the tomb of Song Shaozu, or the incised stone "shrine" of Ning Mao in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, believed to have been produced in Luoyang in the early sixth century: Wang Yintian and Liu Junxi, "Datong Zhijiabao Bei Wei mu shiguo bihua," *Wenwu* (2001), no. 7:40–51; "Datong shi Bei Wei Song Shaozu mu fajiu jianbao," *Wenwu* (2001), no. 7:19–39; and Kojiro Tomita, "A Chinese Sacrificial Stone House of the Sixth Century," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 40 (1942), 242:98–110. The use of gold and red pigments to decorate some of the later sixth-century tomb structures has also been linked to the earlier use of lacquer.
- 49 A stone couch in the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, is decorated with scenes of filial paragons which feature the ox-drawn cart and horse. See Toshio Nagahiro, *Rikuchō jidai bijutsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1969).
- 50 *Jin shu*, *Yufu zhi* (Treatise on carriages and robes) *juan 25*:756.
- 51 See, for example, representations of donors on the base of Buddhist and Daoist steles on the rear face of the Wang Ashan (王阿善) stele of 527 CE or the base of the stele of Cao Wangxi (曹望禧) from 525 CE in *Zhongguo meishu quan ji*, v.19 *huihua bian, shike xianhua* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1984). For murals, see the tomb of X Daogui in Shandong, *Wenwu* (1985), no. 10:45, the impressed-brick tomb from Changzhou in *Kaogu* (1994), no. 12:1097–1103; and an abbreviated example from Zhijiabao in *Wenwu* (2001), no. 7:40–51.
- 52 Guojia wenwu ju, ed., 2004 *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005) and *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6:14–35.
- 53 *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6:34.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 55 Li is said to have been descended from Brahmins, but a report has yet to be published with further details of his epitaph. See Guojia wenwu ju, ed., 2005 *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), 123–28.
- 56 See Judith Lerner, "Les Sogdiens en Chine — Nouvelles découvertes historiques, archéologiques et linguistiques" and Two Recently Discovered Sogdian Tombs in Xi'an," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 15 (2005): 151–62. See the report in *Wenwu* (2008), no. 6:14–35 and n. 4. Brief descriptions can also be found in Guojia wenwu ju, 2005 *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 2006), 123–28.

- 57 Excerpted from the epitaph of Kang Po (康婆; 647 CE), whose grandfather served the Wei and Northern Qi, and whose father was *sabao* of Dingzhou. See *Luoyang chutu lidai muzhi jisheng* 洛陽出土歷代墓誌輯繩 (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991), III, 126.
- 58 Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Taiyuan Sui Yu Hong mu*, figs. 8, 145–46.
- 59 Rong, “Sute Xianjiao meishu dong chuan guocheng zhong de zhuanhua...,” 63. He does not elaborate on the relevance of this new type of subject matter.
- 60 See the work of Pierre Bourdieu, esp. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
- 61 Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5; Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro and Patricia Ebrey, eds., *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200–600* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001).
- 62 Bayart, *Illusion of Cultural Identity*, 66.
- 63 Sometimes the term is made more specific, e.g., *jiehu* (羯胡), or the foreign tribe known as the Jie.
- 64 Historians of China have noted that these perceptions emerged out of the rise of a national consciousness in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and have largely informed modern historical narratives. A few modern historians of the Northern Dynasties and Tang, such as Chen Yinke, have offered a more complex view of the paths of exchange.
- 65 Writing on Manchu institutions, Mark Elliott has argued against adopting this perspective, noting that “despite the many and varied signs of Manchu acculturation, it must be said, however, that using the word ‘Sinicization’ to describe this process is rather misleading. For one thing, adopting Chinese institutions did not mean becoming Chinese except in the most abstract sense ... a shift in cultural practices does not necessarily mean a shift in one’s self-perception or in how one is perceived by others.... Furthermore, a term like Sinicization masks diachronicity and process; it obscures the fact that what is held to be ‘Chinese’ has changed over time by essentializing the political or cultural forms of any given moment as somehow integrally, immutably Chinese.” Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 28.
- 66 Marc Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). Use of the term “Han” and “non-Han” in this context follows Abramson’s text, but this author is cognizant of the problems with using terms that are not clear ethnonyms or political terms.
- 67 See Jonathan Karam Skaff, “Survival in the Frontier Zone: Comparative Perspectives on Identity and Political Allegiance in China’s Inner Asian Borderlands during the Sui-Tang Dynastic Transition (617–630),” *Journal of World History* (June 2004), <http://www.historycooperative.org/cgi-bin/justtop.cgi?act=justtop&url=http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jwh/15.2/skaff.html> (accessed July 8, 2008); and Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007); Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*.
- 68 For an overview and translation see Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 47–49. More detailed accounts can be found in Nicholas Sims-Williams, “The Sogdian Merchants in China and India,” in *Cina e Iran da Alessandro Magno alla dinastia Tang*, ed. Alfredo Cadonna and Lionello Lanciotti (Florence: Olschki, 1996), 45–67; and in Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, ch. 2.
- 69 See *Jiu Tang shu* (Old History of the Tang) *juan* 198:5310 and *Xin Tang shu* (New History of the Tang) *juan* 221b:6244. This characterization, from the two official Tang histories, dates to the tenth and eleventh centuries, but is based on earlier sources. Accounts in earlier histories record that inhabitants of western regions excelled at mercantile activities, but the description that they “go where profit is to be made” appears to have been added in the tenth century. For modern sources, see Vaissière’s work cited in note 9.
- 70 The Sasanians at this time had developed a maritime route to the east. See Lerner, “The Merchant Empire of the Sogdians,” in Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 220–29. On the Sogdian ascendancy during this period, see Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*.
- 71 See *Wenwu* (2001), no. 7:40–51; Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo and Taiyuan shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, “Taiyuan Bei Qi Xu Xianxiu mu fajue jianbao,” *Wenwu* (2003), no. 10:4–40.
- 72 The history has been recounted in several sources, most recently in Mark Lewis, *China Between Empires* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).
- 73 The character of Jinyang and the dual polity system (with Ye) is explained well in John Lee, “Conquest, Division, Unification: A Social and Political History of Sixth Century Northern China” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1985), ch. 4.
- 74 The surge of Central Asian goods into Central Plains China is largely attributed to the opening up of Central Asian trade routes in mid-sixth-century China after

decades of domination by the Hephthalites.

75 Bayart, *Illusion of Cultural Identity*, 95.

76 Frantz Grenet, "The Self-Image of the Sogdians" in Vaissière and Trombert, *Les Sogdiens en Chine*, 137.

77 Ibid. Nancy Steinhardt has examined the construction of these stone structures and the diverse forms of architecture found depicted on the panels in "Structuring Architecture at the Cultural Crossroads: Architecture in Sogdian Funerary Art," *Oriental Art* 49, no. 4 (2003): 48–62.

DISTANT DISPLAYS OF POWER

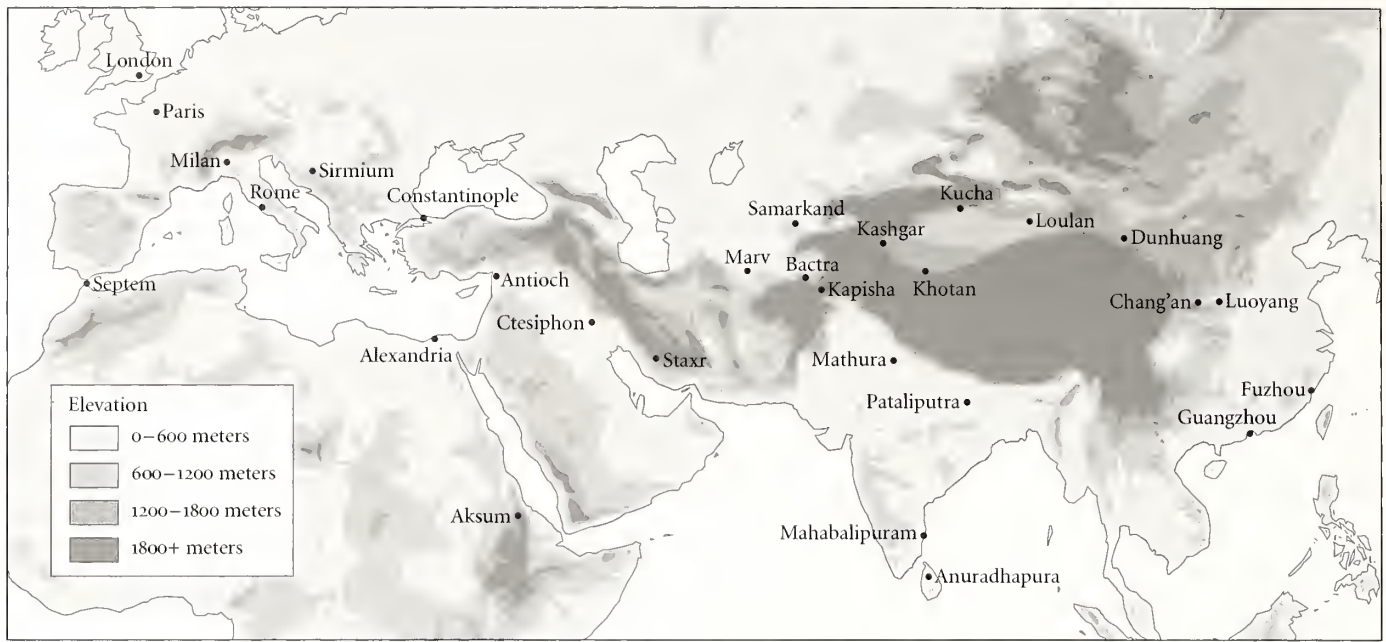
Understanding Cross-Cultural Interaction Among the Elites of Rome, Sasanian Iran, and Sui–Tang China

Abstract

This article analyzes the cultural processes of competitive interactions that unfolded among elites across Eurasia in late antiquity. I focus on the briefly interlocking empires of Rome, Sasanian Persia and Sui–Tang China and analyze the conditions that inspired emperors, client kings, and mercantile elites to incorporate aspects of another elite's visual and ritual material. I consider three types of late antique elite exchange: The first deals with those rare instances where the elites of major powers engaged in a close, direct, and sustained interaction, for example, between Rome and Sasanian Iran. The second situation deals with the use of aristocratic visual cultures by relatively distant civilizations, often in new and unexpected ways, such as took place between Sasanian Iran and Sui–Tang China. Parallel to these grand imperial exchanges, I consider the situation of those peoples such as the Laz, Huns, or Sogdians who stood in between these great empires. I offer a theoretical terminology with which to analyze the dynamics behind the movement of ideas, motifs, and practices between elites who were fascinated as well as often disquieted by one another's cultural material. I explore how this dialogue animated the appropriated material and eventually created new and increasingly intertwined visions of power across late antique military frontiers.

LATE ANTIQUITY, defined here as the period from the third through the eighth centuries CE, has often been characterized from a post-Renaissance, Western European perspective as a period of decline and insularity. In reality, it oversaw a remarkable florescence of global interconnection.¹ The field of competition of major world empires extended increasingly to the global level (Fig. 1). The overlapping trading networks of several entrepreneurial peoples, such as the Bactrians and Sogdians, bound the world together closely, facilitated in no small part by the expansion of world empires, such as those of Sasanian Iran and Tang China.² These powers defined themselves in a self-consciously global fashion and strove with one another not only to control trade, but also to gain control of the symbolic as well as economic capital that flowed through them, informing international aristocratic common cultures.

Growing from my investigations into the complex interactions within and between the Mediterranean and Iranian worlds, this article focuses directly on the cultural processes of the competitive interaction that developed between elites across late antique Eurasia.³ I focus on the briefly interlocking empires of Rome, Sasanian Persia, and Sui–Tang China, and then consider the peoples in between these great empires who facilitated much interaction, such as the Sogdians. I analyze the conditions that inspired emperors, client kings, and merchant princes to



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Map of Eurasia in late antiquity.

incorporate aspects of another elite's visual and ritual material into their own culture and the practices by which they engaged in a complex and competitive dialogue. Taking into account expressions as diverse as displays of military power and textile ornament, I offer a theoretical terminology with which to analyze the dynamics behind the movement of ideas, motifs, and practices between elites who were fascinated as well as challenged by one another's cultural material, and I explore how this dialogue animated the appropriated material and eventually created new and increasingly intertwined visions of power across late antique frontiers.

I consider three types of late antique cultural exchange throughout the article. The first deals with those rare instances where the elites of major powers engaged in a close, direct, and sustained interaction. This is without a doubt the situation that developed between the late Roman and Sasanian empires, and one which is unique in antiquity for the constant level of contact, parity, and familiarity.⁴ Despite the distance separating them, the Persian and Chinese courts also exchanged an increasing number of embassies between the fifth and seventh centuries, peaking under the early Tang. The second type of exchange encompasses the use of aristocratic visual cultures by relatively distant civilizations, often in new and unexpected ways. I take into account how Sasanian visual culture emerged as the aristocratic common culture in late antiquity at the expense of the waning influence of Roman visual culture. The wider impact of Roman, Sasanian, and Tang ritual culture on distant empires, such as Aksum, Gupta South Asia, or the Turkic steppe empires, and the incredible popularity of "western" or, more specifically, Iranian visual culture in early Tang China figure as important issues. Thirdly, I consider the situation of those peoples such as the Armenians, Laz, Arabs, and Sogdians who stood in between these great empires. I pay special attention to the tactics by which they selectively appropriated the visual culture of the powers surrounding them to negotiate an independent relationship, identity, and image in the imperial interstices. These groups often served as engines of cross-cultural exchange between the larger empires.

In these differing situations, I reflect on the motivations for an elite to think of themselves globally and attempt to integrate another structured system of symbolic capital.⁵ The use of the term “exchange” itself demands a few qualifications, since the interactions between these many spheres did not proceed along the lines of an economic system of barter that the word could imply.⁶ Although it could result in a bilateral movement of ideas, it did not take the form of a simple transaction. At the highest level of exchange, the cultural material that moved between courts was itself potentially significant and carried a message or meaning that persistently challenged the recipients, tempting them to integrate it or demanding that they defuse and counter it. At this level, a host culture did not passively receive the goods offered. The material, activities, or ideas that moved between courts were powerful statements but the act of taking was just as potent as that of giving — the consumer was just as powerful as the producer.

Exchange Between World Empires

In late antiquity three interlocking empires dominated the earth: Rome, Sasanian Iran, and Tang China.⁷ The late Roman empire and Sasanian Iran developed a particularly deep and close relationship. In contrast to the Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and early Roman imperial eras, to which late antiquity has often been compared, throughout the majority of the Romans’ and Sasanians’ coexistence a relative parity persisted between the two empires.⁸ They deeply imprinted all those cultures on their peripheries, from Africa to Asia, and the history of the late antique Mediterranean and Western Asia is, arguably, a history of their conflict and cooperation.

The Roman and Sasanian empires coexisted in subdued hostility for the majority of their mutual history (224–642 CE), a fact that tempers any discussion of simple “exchange.” Open warfare punctuated by battlefield negotiations was the hallmark of the initial seven decades of their coexistence. During this period, the two courts often cast each other as a barbarous “other,” or impudent upstarts. After 293, Diocletian’s reforms strengthened the Roman empire and ended the Sasanians’ military dominance. A more fraternal relationship between the two realms emerged and, along with it, an increasingly sophisticated system of diplomacy that endured even the most violent of the fourth and fifth centuries’ hostilities. The fifth and early sixth centuries brought the courts even closer together, with symbolic familial relationships including politically motivated adoptions. By the age of Kōsrow I (r. 531–79) and Justinian I (r. 527–65), the courts considered the ritualized diplomatic equilibrium that had developed not only to be the customary state of affairs, but primordial and divinely ordained. Aristocrats, clergymen, philosophers, and military commanders often defected to the other side, adding an important avenue of communication between the two realms. In the third and sixth centuries, the

Persians deported skilled craftsmen and even populations of entire Roman cities to be forcibly resettled in Iran.

China remained fragmented and its influence subdued until its unification under the Sui (581–617). In the early seventh century, the Tang dynasty (618–907) aggressively expanded militarily to the west, pursuing diplomatic initiatives with Persia and India while weakening those states nearby.⁹ The seventh century witnessed the height of Chinese power in Central Asia and of Persian cultural influence in China.¹⁰ The Tang dynasty's dominion extended even to areas that had been within the Sasanian sphere of influence, such as the heartland of the Sogdians in Transoxiana.¹¹ As far as we have evidence, Rome and China never engaged in the direct diplomatic exchange that occurred between Rome and Persia, or Persia and China. Syrian merchants paid several visits to the Han in the second and third centuries, possibly bringing letters on behalf of an emperor, or just pretending to represent him.¹² In the early seventh century, Rome gained new information from the Turks about the unification of China under the Sui and its growing power under the Tang.¹³ It is tantalizing to hear that the *Jiu Tang shu* (Old Tang History) contains a notice of an embassy sent from Constantinople in 643, about the same time the Sasanian “king of kings” (*šāhān šāh*) was desperately seeking Tang assistance against the Arabs.¹⁴

Following the Sasanian empire's conquest of northwest India, in the third through late sixth centuries, the Sasanian dynasty sent occasional embassies to the courts of the Western Chin, Northern Wei, and Southern dynasties.¹⁵ After the unification of China under the Sui, and especially with the incredible western expansion of the Tang, records of Persian embassies to Chinese courts occur with greater and greater frequency.¹⁶ Although never approaching the regularity or intimacy of Roman and Sasanian diplomatic contact, Chinese–Persian relations were significant and intensified up to the fall of the Sasanians to the Arabs. During a brief period, from circa 581 to 642, the Mediterranean, Near East, and Asia were knitted together by overlapping diplomatic exchanges.

The final transformative conflicts between Heraclius I (r. 610–41) and Kōsrow II (r. 590–628), which were followed in 633–42 by the Arab invasions, swept away this interconnected world. Given the level of contact with Persian officials that occurred during and after Heraclius' campaigns against the Sasanian empire, and the information gained from the Turks, it is entirely probable that Constantinople could have known to send a missive to the Chinese emperor in hopes of opening up an eastern front against the Muslims; ultimately, however, all requests for assistance were in vain. By 651, the last Sasanian king of kings had been assassinated and the Persian empire was completely destroyed, leaving the Tang empire and a much diminished Roman empire to confront the continued expansion of Islam in the next centuries.¹⁷

A sacred ruler who mediated between heaven and earth stood at the center of the Roman, Persian, and Chinese empires. All three defined themselves as “world empires” and were jealous of their preeminent status, a fact that had a direct bearing on their interaction. In flattering court panegyrics, the Roman emperor, in ruling over the *Orbis Romanus*, could understand himself to rule not only the *oikoumenē* (the inhabited world) but also the *orbis terrarum* (the whole earth).¹⁸ According to Zoroastrian cosmology, which the Sasanians adapted to serve as an imperial tool, Iran stood at the center of a divinely created, yet demonically fractured world.¹⁹ This cosmology, inflected as it was with the dynamics of a supernatural battle between good and evil, informed the imperial ideology of the Sasanians as they interacted with a vast array of lands and peoples that offered themselves as tempting prizes, or threatened, like a demonic force of chaos, to disrupt or supplant their own imperial order. In contrast to their neighbors, the “kings” of India, China, and Rome, who variously presented the extent of their empires as “the world” in its entirety, the Sasanian dynasty defined themselves in relation to a wider global view. Great sovereigns and rich empires could exist outside the kingdom of Iran, yet the Sasanian king of kings was their ultimate master and superior. Like their predecessors, Chinese emperors under the Sui and Tang also understood themselves to rule the “entire world.”²⁰ Any foreign state that entered into contact with the imperial court thus entered into a highly structured tributary system, and was interpreted as acknowledging a subordinate status to the Son of Heaven.²¹ The Chinese court distinguished between “outer subjects” and “remote countries.”²² The rulers of “outer subjects” were granted Chinese court titles and integrated into the court hierarchy, and in return were expected to defend the Middle Kingdom. The ruler of a “remote country” was unable to maintain regular contact with China or was considered unimportant. Interestingly, according to the *Xin Tang shu* (New Tang History), Persia (*Bosī*) was considered an “outer subject” while Japan was merely a “remote country.”²³ The “remote countries” were then graded as “greater” or “lesser,” according to the reputation of a country among its neighbors and the extent to which it was Sinicized.²⁴ During times of Chinese strength, the Tang institution of tribute, investiture, and rank could hold real political and economic meaning for states within East Asia, who often depended on the Chinese system of hierarchy for conducting diplomacy with each other. The Chinese court would accept the “submission” of powerful, distant empires such as Rome or Sasanian Iran for symbolic purposes, in much the same way as the Persians or Romans accepted, or would have accepted, such submission from the Chinese.²⁵

Diplomatic interaction facilitated court-to-court contacts and movement of visual material, yet many important channels existed outside the direct control of the imperial center.²⁶ These included skilled workers seeking opportunity;

Buddhist, Manichaean, and Christian missionaries and pilgrims; and, most importantly, mercantile activity. The larger world of human, religious, and mercantile commerce brought the great powers and regional elites into contact, allowing for the movement of ideas between realms, sometimes even piggybacking on the official channels of diplomacy. From the perspective of the self-proclaimed universal empires, the economic, demographic, and political forces that facilitated exchange also provided the stage and actors for their dramatic expressions of power. Prominent merchants conducted many of the Roman and Sasanian “embassies” to the Chinese court, and it is possible that many of these were actually initiated only by the merchant’s own self-interest. Thus, in the eyes of the courts, just as routine embassies could be expressions of “submission,” trade could be “tribute” and indemnities they themselves were compelled to pay could be portrayed as “gifts.”²⁷

Beginning in the second century BCE, Chinese imperial initiatives dominated the dynamic of trade between Rome, Iran, and China. Han Chinese diplomatic missions traveled west with thousands of bolts of silk, cultivating a market for Han silk in Central Asia and the Arsacid empire of Iran, and, due to Arsacid efforts, Rome.²⁸ Eastern Iranian merchants soon followed them back, establishing trading colonies along the trade routes and in the Chinese capitals. From the second century BCE to the fourth century CE, traders from Bactria, the core of the Kuṣāṇa empire, were dominant.²⁹ Bactrian trading networks and even techniques formed the basis of the much more extensive Sogdian trading empire, which dominated Central Asia from the fourth to the ninth centuries.³⁰

Fueled in no small part by the Tang aristocracy’s lust for Iranian luxury items, this direction of trade reversed in late antiquity. The reciprocal forces of Chinese and Sasanian diplomacy, Tang expansion into Iranian Central Asia, and the entrepreneurial efforts of the Sogdians brought an influx of Iranian cultural goods into the Sui and Tang empires, as well as the Roman empire.³¹ As the Sasanians dismantled the Kuṣāṇa empire, the Sogdians developed a trading network and emigrated to the Chinese lands in successive waves under the Wei, Sui, and Tang empires. With their homeland in Transoxiana, the Sogdians established permanent settlements across Central Asia, from the Black Sea to the great capitals of Luoyang and Chang’an in China.³² Sogdian merchants sold western-inspired luxury goods, which became en vogue among the Tang elite, and even served as imperial officials and soldiers, as well as advisors to the Goktürk steppe empire. While the Sasanians expended a great deal of energy to prevent Roman access to eastern markets, in certain instances the Romans and Sogdians attempted to work together to cut out the Persian middleman.³³ To the south, sailors from the Sasanian empire, largely of Syrian Christian identity, established sea routes which connected the Persian Gulf with southern India, Sri Lanka, and eventually the South China Sea.³⁴

On the back of these land and sea routes, the three great proselytizing religions of late antiquity — Christianity, Manichaeism, and Buddhism — were responsible for generating movements of people, ideas, and objects. Merchants and Nestorian missionaries stemming from the Sasanian empire's vibrant, indigenous Christian population spread the religion further afield to southern India, Central Asia, and eventually China.³⁵ Indeed Nestorian monks reportedly smuggled silkworms out of China and sold them to the Emperor Justinian I, planting the seeds of a silk industry in the Mediterranean.³⁶ Multilingual Manichaean missionaries spread the "Religion of Light" (originally founded in Iran) throughout the Mediterranean and Central Asia, adapting its message to the ritual and visual forms of whichever culture they found themselves inhabiting.³⁷ In contrast to the periodic intolerance of the Sasanian and especially Roman empires, Sui and early Tang China were incredibly open. The growth of Buddhism as an imperial religion in China not only brought new cultural forms but stimulated Chinese exploration of Buddhism's earlier homes and birthplace in Central and South Asia.³⁸ In many cases, such as Roman religious diplomacy in southern Yemen and in Aksum, the spread of religion was the result of an exertion of imperial will; however, these processes largely evolved outside the direct control of the empires.³⁹

Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction among Imperial Elites

In order to account for the range of interactions between these realms, encompassing both collaborative and hostile situations, it is best to focus first on what lay at the core of all types of interchange between emperors. The processes that articulated Roman, Sasanian, and Tang royal competition and exchange were, first and foremost, the means by which the sovereigns crafted their own identities and attempted to control those of their counterparts. In many studies of the ancient world, identity formation often has to do with the collective identity of a nation, city, gender, or cult, since interests in individual self-construction are wrapped up in modern notions of individuality, authorship, and artistic genius, models that are anachronistic for the ancient and medieval world.⁴⁰ As far as it relates to this project, the study of royal identity (which does indeed focus on an individual identity of sorts) requires a different approach from the study of individual identity.⁴¹ When one deals with the identity of an emperor, the identities of many dominant collectives, ethnic, political, urban, gender, or cultic, are wrapped up in that of the individual man.

The Roman, Sasanian, and Chinese courts each cultivated grand architectural settings, rich visual and sartorial experiences, and complex systems of ritual. These translated their grand claims into tangible reality for their own people and visitors alike.⁴² In this and other studies I have found it fruitful to approach Roman and

Sasanian royal art, architecture, and ritual as an expressive whole, an approach that can be useful when studying the Tang as well.⁴³ This enables one to coherently interpret the linkages between the rich variety of visual, sensual, spatial, and emotional constituents that Roman, Sasanian, and Tang ritual marshaled.

Such an approach is important for studying the realms' interaction as much as it is for understanding their expressions individually: the empires applied and adapted their ritual—visual techniques to articulating their relationships with each other. As the existence of another structured system of aristocratic legitimacy could seriously threaten or destabilize a sovereign's own courtly hierarchy, the courts aimed their assertions of their and their opponents' identity not only at each other, but back to their own members. This posed less of a problem for Sui and especially Tang China, which could admire the courtly productions of the West with a bemused detachment; however, amid the ceaseless war and diplomatic exchange that prevailed between Rome and Iran, it was deadly serious. The other king could be cast either as usurper and enemy or partner and equal, although most of the time these strategies coexisted, with contradictory messages presented to internal and external audiences. Sovereigns could unproblematically take up their opponents' cultural goods at the same time as denouncing them as enemies, casting them as their "subject and miserable slaves" in discourse aimed at an internal audience while calling them "brothers" in diplomatic exchange. Emperors therefore directed much of the energy and creativity expended in the interactive processes toward establishing or maintaining the coherency of their own ideology and ritual—visual tools of dominance, in the face of symbolic capital generated and controlled by their competitors.

Defining royal identity, either reflexively or against the malicious attacks of another sovereign, was a symbolic tool by which an emperor could manipulate the identities of all those collectives bound up with him. Through these processes of strategic predication sovereigns deployed ritual, visual, or discursive means to construct or shape their own identities and those of their opponents. They did this to establish their dominance on the global stage, obtain cooperation or clemency in times of distress, or influence or mobilize elements of their own or the other's society.⁴⁴ The word "strategic" accentuates the fact that these rhetorical approaches were very much involved with other, more direct instruments for the empires' defense or aggrandizement, such as the application of physical force or payment of subsidies, and oftentimes enveloped and articulated these more naked expressions of power.

Let us examine several relatively straightforward examples involving visual, ritual, and discursive modes of expression. In several instances, Roman and Persian sovereigns depicted their counterparts in monumental representations, always



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2
Detail of the central panel of the
monumental rock relief of Šāpūr I at
Bīšāpūr, Iran (Bīšāpūr, relief II), after
261. Photograph by the author

in an “ideologically correct” position: defeated or submitting. After his invasion of the Roman east and successful checking of two Roman counterinvasions, Šāpūr I (r. 241–72 CE) carved a number of rock reliefs celebrating these achievements. These reliefs did more than merely record events: his last rock relief at Bīšāpūr (II) also directs yet another potent attack at the Romans, manipulating their identities and thus that of the entire Roman empire (Fig. 2). The central equestrian figure of Šāpūr dominates the scene. He tramples the prone figure of one Roman emperor and with his right hand clasps the wrists of another, the Emperor Valerian, while yet another figure, Philip the Arab, performs the act of ritual submission before him (*adoratio/proskynēsis*).⁴⁵ Figures representing other subject peoples and allies fill out the remaining registers of the rock relief, putting the submission of the Romans into a global pictorial context. Though Valerian’s son, Gallienus, continued ruling a troubled yet independent Roman empire, disavowing his father after defeat, the image of Valerian at Bīšāpūr constructs the entire Roman empire as tributary to the Sasanian king — an assertion which Šāpūr echoes in his inscriptions at Naqš-e Rostam.⁴⁶ The privileged audience for this image, like the others at the site, were most likely confined to the Sasanian priestly and aristocratic hierarchy, and its primary function was to define, elevate and fix Šāpūr’s identity in the minds of his court as truly *šāhān šāh* in a global sense — Lord of the *Aiyya* and non-*Aiyya* alike.⁴⁷ Meanwhile the inscription’s Greek translation, consonant with the Near Eastern convention of trilingual inscriptions using the languages of conquered empires, ensured that Šāpūr’s message could be intelligible to privileged visiting or captured Romans as well.

A generation later, the Roman emperor Galerius I (r. 305–311) included numerous images of the Persian king of kings Narseh, whom he had defeated in the battle of Satala, in a monumental vestibule to his palace.⁴⁸ Within this domed tetrapylon, the most striking image of Narseh to have survived is certainly that in a scene of equestrian combat on the inner face, originally flanking the gate to the palace precincts (Fig. 3). Numerous monuments portraying submitting Persians embellished Constantinople, including the Theodosian obelisk monument (Fig. 4) and



3

3

Equestrian combat of Galerius and Narseh. Tetrastyle of Galerius, Thessaloniki, ca. 302. Southwest pier, north face. Photograph by the author

Justinian's equestrian monument in the Hippodrome, the Column of Justinian in the Augusteum, and the base of the Column of Arcadius in the Forum of Arcadius. Many, like the obelisk monument and Column of Arcadius, pair the images of figures in Iranian costumes with northern, German barbarians.

While images of foreign kings did not occupy such a constant and central place as they did in Roman and Persian triumphal architecture, they were still an important component of early Tang tombs. These tombs were envisioned as walled cities with underground palaces, provisioned above ground with temples, altars, and staff to venerate the deceased emperor.⁴⁹ Rivaling the size of the actual palaces in Chang'an, they were as much affirmations and images of the Tang dynasty's conception of their empire's place in the world as monuments to individual emperors. With the imperial bodies at the symbolic center, the tomb monuments displayed courtiers and guards as well as foreign emissaries and subject kings, all conforming to an ideal vision of the Tang world.⁵⁰ The grandest of the imperial mausoleums, that of the Emperor Taizong (r. 626–49), with a perimeter extending 60 kilometers, integrated images of foreigners in multiple positions determined according to their relative importance to the Chinese imperial center. Fourteen statues of foreign kings, identified by name, flanked the path to the north of the altar inside the north gate.⁵¹ In the tomb of Taizong's sixth son, Li Xian (653–84), murals of foreign emissaries lined the passage that led to the central tomb chamber.⁵² At the Qianling Mausoleum, the tomb of Gaozong (d. 683) and Wu Zetian (d. 705), sixty-one monumental stone statues of foreign emissaries cluster at the ritually appropriate place. Just like envoys visiting court, they wait outside the monument's inner wall, which symbolically corresponds to the gatehouse to the actual imperial city.⁵³ Among these are two statues of the Sasanian royal family, including the eldest son of Yazdgerd III (r. 632–37), the last Sasanian king, whose inscription describes him as "Peroz, King of Persia, Grand General of the Right Courageous Guard and Commander-in-chief of Persia."⁵⁴



4

4
The Emperor Theodosius and co-emperors receiving Persian and Germanic envoys. Theodosian obelisk monument, Istanbul, after 391. Photograph by the author

While these triumphal monuments directly reflected imperial self-conception, the structure of diplomatic ritual resulted from a more conversational process. Reception ceremonies were the most direct sites of interaction between these intensely structured court hierarchies.⁵⁵ Diplomatic interaction, in effect, spliced together the Roman and Persian or Persian and Chinese ceremonial, and thus the ritual systems of two (or more) empires. Diplomatic discourse, especially between Rome and Persia, could contain a delicate balance of expressions of brotherhood on the one hand, and veiled threats and sublimated violence on the other.

All three empires adhered to detailed protocols for receiving envoys and the rituals that they prescribed encoded all manner of implicit and explicit power relations.⁵⁶ Diplomatic protocol was intended to “display order to visitors in grand ceremonies.”⁵⁷ The bureaucracies in Chang’an and Constantinople each maintained a special office dedicated to diplomatic communication and receptions, as well as several officials to manage the actual reception rituals, institutions that were paralleled at the Persian court of Ctesiphon.⁵⁸ The host empire would cover the expenses of housing, food, and transportation from the moment the foreign delegations crossed the frontier.⁵⁹

All three empires structured the diplomatic ritual environment to conform to the idea of a Romano-, Perso-, or Sinocentric world. The art, architectural, and ritual setting of the reception, and especially an audience, expressed to the envoy in visual and spatial form the sovereigns’ global identity. The late Sasanian kings of kings employed several spatial and symbolic elements in their audience hall to inculcate a tangible experience of their global dominance, and the foreign state’s subordinate place in relation to the Persian court.

In the collection of customs of the reception hall of [Kosrow I] Ānošervān was [one that dictated that], inside [the throne room], a golden chair was placed to the right of his throne [*takt*], and in this manner golden chairs were placed too to the left and to the rear, thus three chairs. One of the chairs was for the king of China, another was for the king of Rome, and the third was that of the [Hephthalite] king, so that when they came to his reception hall they could sit on the chairs. Year in and year out these three chairs stood and they were not removed and, but for these three, no other was allowed to sit on them. And in front of the throne there was a golden throne on which Bozorgmehr [Wuzurgmihr ī Bōxtagān, the *wuzurg framadār* or “vizier”] sat and lower than that [chair] there was a chair of the chief *Mobed* and below that was a number of chairs for all the governors and nobles of the realm and the place of each one was fixed, so that no one would be able to make a dispute with another. And when K̲hosrow became angry with one, his chair was moved from the *Ayvān*.⁶⁰

In the royal palace of Ctesiphon the king of kings displayed the suits of chain mail and swords of “subject” sovereigns, including the Roman emperor, the “Kāghān,” and Dāhir (identified with a king of India), as well as the weapons of a number of defeated usurpers.⁶¹ A Chinese envoy would find himself and his emperor incorporated visually, ritually, and spatially into this Perso-centric universe, and a Persian envoy at the Sui or Tang court would experience much the same.⁶² Banquets held in honor of a visiting Persian envoy displayed and enacted these ideals in another setting. In Chang’an, the status of the land hosted determined not only the ritual protocol at these banquets, but even the food served.⁶³

Because of the extreme delicacy and intimacy of relations between Rome and Sasanian Iran, the diplomatic experience could vary from equal and fraternal to one marked by power differentials. When relations were good, simple gestures at diplomatic audiences strategically predicated the identity of the envoy on that of the emperor he served. Upon rendering *proskynēsis* to the sovereign, for example, the envoy sat next to the receiving emperor who would speak to him as if he were a direct conduit to the other emperor.⁶⁴ In the best of times the emperors called each other (and thus predicated their relationship on that of) brothers or friends.⁶⁵ This equality could extend into banqueting arrangements. During a period of good relations, Justinian I allowed the Persian envoy Yazd-Gusnašp to dine with him at his table and even allowed his translator to recline in the ancient manner at the table. This shocked Procopius, Justinian I’s court historian, who viewed this treatment of the Persian envoy as inappropriate and indulgent.⁶⁶ In the worst of times, the symbolically charged person of the envoy could suffer the abuse that the receiving

emperor intended to inflict on the identity and person of his royal opponent. The Sasanian emperors' occasional violation of custom — and their detention in miserable conditions, torture, and execution of Roman envoys — takes on added significance if we extend the logic inherent in the ritual environment of the diplomatic reception to that of the prison.⁶⁷

The rhetoric of diplomatic missives was rife with such strategic identity manipulation. In Chinese diplomatic vocabulary, when a foreign emissary arrived at the Tang court, rather than simply “visiting” he would automatically be described as “submitting and paying tribute,” “asking to become a subject,” or “returning to pay tribute,” whether this was intended or not.⁶⁸ If they were not already in the expected form, the envoy's letters were translated not only into Chinese, but into an ideologically correct language that ensured they were appropriately subordinate.⁶⁹

The most famous example of this phenomenon between Rome and Iran comes from Peter the Patrician (ca. mid-sixth century), writing about the negotiations between Narseh and Galerius in 298. After suffering a crushing defeat, which even brought about the capture of the Sasanian king's wives, children, and sisters, Narseh sent an envoy to sue for peace. The Sasanian envoy came as a suppliant and attempted to promote a new rhetorical vision very different from the antagonistic and violent dealings that had gone before:

Apharban, who was particularly dear to Narseh, king of Persia, was sent on an embassy and came before Galerius in supplication. When he had received license to speak, he said, “It is clear to all mankind that the Roman and Persian empires are like two lights, and like (two) eyes, the brilliance of one should make the other more beautiful and not continuously rage for their mutual destruction.”⁷⁰

In an abrupt switch from Narseh's policy of naked aggression before his reversal of fortune, the Sasanian envoy attempted to recast the two empires' hostile relationship into one of partnership, predicated on a metaphor of anatomical health and cosmic permanency. These were not just empty words but affected the meaning of the sovereigns' actions and led to a change in their behavior, as the following passage reflecting later Roman–Sasanian interaction illustrates:

[Kosrow II], honored among the gods, lord and king of all the earth, offspring of the great Aramazd, to Heraclius, our senseless and insignificant servant. You have not wished to submit yourself to us, but you call yourself lord and king. My treasure which is with you, you spend; my servants you defraud; and having collected an army of brigands, you give me no rest....

Let not your vain hopes deceive you. For that Christ who was not able to save himself from the Jews — but they killed him by hanging him on a cross — how can the same save you from my hands? “For if you descend into the depths of the sea,” I shall stretch out my hand and seize you. And then you will see me in a manner you will not desire.⁷¹

In this exchange, Kosrow II predicated Heraclius’ identity on that of a slave, leading to the very real consequence of war. Such visual and discursive statements either invited emperors to collaborate or challenged them to respond in a competitive fashion.

All embassies brought gifts and most (when relations were good) received gifts on their return.⁷² When given to client kings, gifts were important tools in establishing dominance and cultural influence (see below). Between “equals” they were the vehicle of coded exchanges.⁷³ Special officials in the imperial courts of Constantinople and Chang’an were charged with carefully evaluating and thoroughly cataloguing the material and symbolic worth of all diplomatic gifts and determining appropriate responses.⁷⁴

If their opponent’s polemical material, be it visual or ritual, was effective or useful in some way the sovereigns did not hesitate to appropriate it, that is, take it and incorporate it into their own visual or practical cultures. Oftentimes they remodeled it in some way and then redeployed it back at their opponents. Appropriation is a key term in understanding cultural interaction between Rome and Sasanian Iran yet one that requires careful definition, since it has also proved to be quite useful to other fields and situations.⁷⁵ In one sense, appropriation is the “the taking—from a culture that is not one’s own—of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge.”⁷⁶ The process of appropriation could indeed be competitive and even pernicious in so far as it sought to gain control of dangerous modes of discourse or display cultural spoils of war taken from the other empire. However, as “complex processes by which spaces, objects, and other ‘cultural expressions’ are brought to represent something different from their original purposes,” acts of appropriation were also culturally creative and innovatory.⁷⁷ In taking, borrowing, responding to, or seizing each others’ visual, ritual, and discursive productions and putting them in dialogue with their own, the courts continually generated, imaged, and enacted new visions of the world. Sometimes this creative reuse was a simple integration of appropriated elements into an entirely new context where they took on a life of their own quite unrelated to the dynamic of the two realms’ agonistic exchange. In other situations these acts of appropriation served in a complex system of polemical exchange, directed at the opponents.

The desire to gain power over each other, lesser external rivals, internal threats, and the populace were prime preoccupations for all three emperors as universal sovereigns. Simply put, the regimes' prime objectives in the process of appropriation were to gain power over something (or someone) and create or consolidate its (or their) identity.⁷⁸ All three emperors expended a great deal of time, money, and energy seeking to gain power over symbolically charged urban and monumental spaces, as well as rituals and triumphal images. The primary motivation for this obsession is best understood as an all-consuming drive to jealously protect and continually redefine their identities as timeless "cosmic kings" in the face of a changing sea of threats. Since they did not always enjoy a position of military dominance, this need for control extended throughout the spectrum of symbolic expressions that supplemented pure force.

The process of appropriation involved incorporating foreign material into a new visual, architectural, spatial, or ritual context. Generally speaking, this could be a simple transfer of an unchanged ritual action or image into a new context. Images, spaces, or practices could take on a changed significance simply by virtue of the fact that they had been incorporated into a different cultural context or performed by a different sovereign: the very fact that the material was "captured" and kept in a changed context modified its meaning. To provide perhaps an extreme example, the "true cross" taken by Kōsrow II from Jerusalem temporarily became a Sasanian triumphal symbol through its ritual incorporation in the victorious army's return march and its new architectural context in Ctesiphon.⁷⁹ Similarly, the Roman hippodrome at Apamea and the hippodrome games themselves became a Sasanian triumphal space and ritual, through Kōsrow I's appropriation of them.⁸⁰ Even individuals enveloped in a ritual environment could take on a new meaning, as in the case of the Sasanian court-in-exile in Tang China, or of a Sasanian dignitary's prominence in one of Heraclius' carefully stage-managed urban ceremonies; he symbolized the emperor's Persian victories and hoped for (though ultimately vain) plans for Iran.⁸¹ However, at the highest levels of discourse, sovereigns subtly modified appropriated material in a careful process of strategic remodeling before they redeployed it, in order to fine tune the statement or respond to specific assertions by their opponents.

This was the case not just with objects, but activities. Hunting was the most prominent royal and aristocratic entertainment in all empires; however, polo, chess, and backgammon moved from one culture to another through diplomatic activity or other high-level exchanges.⁸² This movement was most often from the Iranian cultural sphere to Rome and China, either through direct or indirect avenues. The introduction of polo in particular, with the presence of a polo court in the palace grounds of Constantinople and Chang'an and the depiction of polo in Tang tombs,



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Polo players. Tomb of Li Xian, ca.
706. Qian County, Shaanxi province,
China. The John C. and Susan L.
Huntington Archive of Buddhist
and Related Art, The Ohio State
University

vividly demonstrates the wide impact of Sasanian court life as a global aristocratic common culture, even as the dynasty's empire itself waned (Fig. 5).⁸³

Ornament, Display, and Cross-Continental Power and Prestige

While I have concentrated thus far on the grand and often bombastically direct statements made by imperial reception rituals and triumphal monuments, I now turn to a more fluid species of symbolic capital that offered a no less effective means of defining royal identity: ornament. While the study of ornament lies on the margins of mainstream art historical interest, it has simultaneously served as an important arena for the debate of broader theoretical issues.⁸⁴ This could be in part because the subject attracted art history's heroes such as Alois Riegl, Henri Focillon, and E. H. Gombrich, as well as those who have played the role of its villains, such as Josef Strzygowski.⁸⁵

Within the last century and a half, two often interrelated approaches have governed the study of ornament: taxonomic organization and philosophical interpretation.⁸⁶ Classifying ornamental motifs into precise, descriptive taxonomies according to morphology, culture or region of origin, and even developmental progression has proved to be an attractive end for a certain body of scholarship as well as a basic methodological building block for many art historical studies.⁸⁷ This approach is alluring in that it promises, and often provides, some sort of empirical handle on the wild varieties of visual phenomena related to ornament and the decorative arts. Historiographically speaking, taxonomic work frequently engendered interest in what lay behind the visual and cultural phenomenon of ornament.⁸⁸ But the process was also reciprocal and the theoretical ideas that the classificatory work gave rise to also formed the organizational basis for supposedly pure, empirical endeavors. In certain instances, a misuse of formal analysis led to specious developmental models, still often taken as fact, and even a false "empiri-

cal” base for ideologically motivated racial theories.⁸⁹ Both approaches emphasize an internal evolutionary drive or innate cultural identity, and offer little means for understanding evidence of cross-cultural interaction. Evolutionary systems assume an internal, linear process of development; any appearance of “foreign” material, which does not follow from previous forms, quickly subverts the theories and is treated as an embarrassing aberration to be absorbed or simply ignored.⁹⁰ Josef Strzygowski’s *volkische* theories of diffusion provide the classic examples of nationalist misuse of these approaches, just as later Soviet and Maoist archaeology attempted to map contemporary Russian or Chinese hegemony onto archaeological evidence.⁹¹

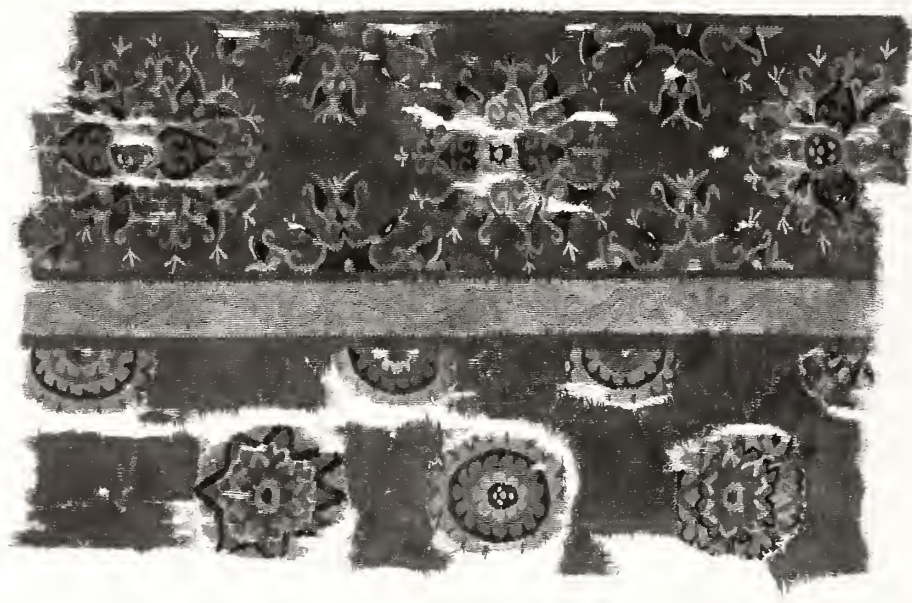
Studies of ornament that emphasize cognition and human agency, such as E. H. Gombrich’s *The Sense of Order* and Oleg Grabar’s *The Mediation of Ornament*, offer more useful points of departure.⁹² Such approaches put the focus on ornament’s capacity to create and convey meaning and even allow that ornament itself can be “the subject” of an object or structure.⁹³ Just as importantly, they provide an interpretive space in which to consider the impact of patrons’ and consumers’ choices on the development and meaning of ornamental material. As discussed above, the motives and worldviews of the Roman, Persian, and Chinese emperors that drove these processes of cross-cultural interaction sprang primarily from the need to secure prestige and power. Alongside its formal functions, such as framing, filling, linking, or just pleasurably embellishing, I argue that one of the most important vocations of ornament within the context of elite tastes and display was its power to communicate political messages and define identities.⁹⁴ As an important subcomponent of its role in “compelling a relationship between objects or works of art and viewers and users,” ornament, and often ornament perceived as exotic, could define the patron’s, as well as the viewer’s, relationship with the structure or object with respect to their own social place or elite status.⁹⁵ Due to its open-ended semiotic and symbolic possibilities, ornament could provide a level of allusion and flexibility that highly defined, even legislated, imperial regalia and iconographies could not.

Ornamental motifs, often found in the margins of sacred architecture, luxury objects, palaces, tombs and court costumes, offered a subtle means to control an emperor’s identity and manage the economy of courtly hierarchy. Scholarship has documented many intriguing examples of foreign objects transported across thousands of miles to be consumed by distant aristocracies. More complex to interpret are the instances of foreign motifs incorporated into architectural ornament, objects, or clothing in a new cultural context.⁹⁶ These range from late Sasanian textiles or small luxury objects, such as the metal and stone vessels found in a hoard deposited in the Xinghua ward of Chang’an, dedicated to nobility and court officials, to grand architectural spaces, such as Justinian I’s Hagia Sophia, where acres



6

6
Mosaic ornament of the inner
narthex, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, ca.
536. Photograph by the author



7

7
Late Sasanian/early Islamic
textile fragment with quadrifoliate
ornamental motifs. Wool, ca. seventh
century. Height 30.5 cm, width 47.6
cm. The Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Rogers Fund, 1950 (50.83)

of mosaic bear what appears on the surface to be Sasanian ornamental design (Figs. 6, 7).⁹⁷ Scholarship has especially explored the craze for “western” luxuries in the early Tang dynasty, including food, fashions, and entertainments largely imported from the Iranian world.⁹⁸ Such goods, images, and ideas arrived via diverse pathways and carriers and tracking them would require as many focused studies as instances. Here, I explore what motivated elite patrons’ selection, incorporation, or display of such ornamental material.

In rare instances, direct interaction between the empires shaped both the nature of the appropriation and the several possible meanings the material took on in its new home. As the uneven distribution of the material suggests, the processes and practices by which these motifs moved between cultures were not uniform. In some cases they were directly connected with craftsmen, who traveled between the courts voluntarily or were captured in one of the many wars. The most famous examples of this phenomenon come undoubtedly from the Mediterranean-inspired ornament that appeared in the palace of the Sasanian king of kings, Šāpūr I, after he had sacked many cities in Roman Syria and Cappadocia, including the region’s metropolis, Antioch.⁹⁹ At Bīšāpūr, a city founded by Šāpūr after his campaigns, Roman architectural ornament was highlighted as a central decorative feature of his palace.¹⁰⁰ In some cases, such as floor mosaics, these motifs appeared in a Roman medium. In others, Roman craftsmen evidently translated Classical architectural ornament into the Persian medium of stucco.

Diplomatic exchanges could also stimulate an appreciation of an opponent’s architectural ornament. The best-documented example is the occurrence of late Roman marble and mosaic work in Ƙosrow I’s palace in Ctesiphon, which likely resulted not only from the king of kings’ military victories, including his own sack of Antioch in 540, but from Justinian I’s diplomatic gifts.¹⁰¹ Theophylact Simocatta records that, “Justinian provided [Ƙosrow] son of [Qobād] with Greek marble, building experts, and craftsmen skilled in ceilings, and that a palace situated close to Ctesiphon was constructed for [Ƙosrow] with Roman expertise.”¹⁰² While the archaeological surveys of Tell Dahab, one of the sites associated with the palace,

hint that Roman techniques and materials likely counted as only a small proportion of the building's embellishment, they were certainly present.¹⁰³ More importantly, these techniques and materials distinguished the palace of the king of kings from those of the upper nobility, which show no trace of them.

Other cases did not follow this model of simple transfer. In several more complex examples, craftsmen took foreign motifs normally present in one medium and incorporated them into an entirely different medium and context.¹⁰⁴ The Roman craftsmen who incorporated Persian textile and stucco ornament into the mosaics of Justinian I's Hagia Sophia, the weavers of Sogdian textiles who used Persian and Roman motifs, as well as Chinese ceramicists who adapted Persian shapes and motifs all provide ready examples of this phenomenon (Figs. 6, 7, 8 and 9).¹⁰⁵

The architectural and rupestrian remains from the reign of Kōsrow II juxtapose several Iranian and Roman architectural forms, such as the late Roman "basket capital," or the arcuated façade of a triumphal arch. The exterior of Kōsrow II's rock-cut *ayvān* at Tāq-e Bostān integrates a façade that recalls aspects of a Roman triumphal arch into what is in effect a recreation of a Sasanian barrel-vaulted audience hall. While not simply "ornament," the winged victories incorporated into the "spandrels" of the façade not only sensitively integrate this traditional Roman symbol of victory into an Iranian architectural form and medium, but deploy them alongside Iranian imagery of victory, such as hunting, which occur in the interior. The high degree of subtlety indicates that the sculptors and patron knew and deliberately played on the traditions and symbolism of both cultures' architectural and sculptural forms.

Set against a larger Eurasian context, Sasanian courtly images enjoyed an exceptionally wide prestige, popularity, and utility, used and reinterpreted in Constantinople and Chang'an even after the Persian empire's demise. The role that these images and objects played in conversations that took place within the empires, that is, between the sovereign and the upper echelon of the aristocracy, was the most important force compelling their movement. For example, early and mid-sixth-century Constantinople witnessed a heavily contested political environment where several new and old dynastic lines strove to assert or establish their legitimacy. Sasanian ornamental motifs in Anicia Juliana's church of Hagios Polyeuktos, and later in Justinian I's Hagia Sophia, served as a subtle way to make imperial claims (Fig. 6).¹⁰⁶

As in Constantinople, the popularity of Sasanian or Sasanian-inspired objects and motifs amongst the imperial elite in Sui–Tang China often had to do with their role in establishing and inculcating difference between social ranks and was often quite independent from their original political or religious context.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the sovereigns of the major empires interacted with foreign ornamental material in order to situate themselves with respect to larger aristocratic common-cultures



8

8
Mosaic of Justinian I, detail of the *tablion* showing pearl roundel and bird textile patterns, ca. 548. San Vitale presbytery, Ravenna. Photograph by the author



9

9
Kōsrow II and his courtiers, detail showing textiles with bird and pearl roundel patterns and *sēnmurws*, ca. early seventh century. Great Ayvān, Tāq-e Bostān, Iran. Photograph by the author

that were developing across Eurasia. This was no doubt the purpose of the circular textile motifs that decorated the *tablion* on Justinian I's imperial chlamys in the San Vitale mosaic and those of Theodora's retinue, or the clothing of Kōsrow II and his courtiers at Tāq-e Bostān, or of Persian dignitaries and Sogdian noblemen portrayed in frescos at the palace of the king of Samarkand or in aristocratic houses at Panjikent (Figs. 8–10).¹⁰⁸ During the period under study, the popularity of Classical visual culture in Eurasia precipitously declined, with Sasanian court culture quickly filling the void both in the Mediterranean, Central Asia, and China, and remaining influential long after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty.¹⁰⁹ From the point of view of China, much of this “Persian” material was produced and imported by the Sogdians. It is interesting to contemplate which — if any — culture the consumers attributed to the material or the motifs, or whether, like the many other luxury items imported in the early Tang dynasty, they were simply understood as “Persian” no matter whether of Roman, Persian, or Sogdian origin.¹¹⁰

Negotiating Identity in the Interstices of World Empires

The empires' courts and urban centers, under the auspices of diplomacy, were the premiere arenas for symbolic display and identity manipulation; however, related events took place far afield. The court practices of client states and even the very bodies of client kings presented a venue for competition as empires vied to establish cultural and political dominance, providing these sovereigns with the marks of legitimate kingship and securing for them the “gold standard” of legitimacy. The titles and insignia gifted by the Sui and Tang courts not only visually articulated the internal hierarchy of several East Asian states, but served as the basis for interstate communications that took place independently of China.¹¹¹ Rome and Sasanian Iran repeatedly strove with each other to invest client kings in the Caucasus, Pontus, and the Arab borderlands.¹¹² Such an “insignia-race” occurred between the Arab clients of Rome and the Sasanians, the Huns of the Pontus steppe and among



10

10

Mural from the western wall of the “Hall of the Ambassadors,” detail showing pearl roundel, bird, and *sēnmurw* textile motifs. Royal palace in Sogdian Samarkand (Afrāsiab). Photograph by the author

the peoples of the Caucasus. The Lakhmid and Ghassanid rulers, for example, were integrated into both court hierarchies, and appropriated diverse aspects of their court cultures.¹¹³ Even if they did not exert direct control, their expanded knowledge of the world and drive for totalizing coherence tempted the courts to incorporate distant states into a single hierarchy. The Roman and Sasanian courts sought to exert influence culturally as well as militarily in such realms as the Aksumite kingdom of Ethiopia or in Yemen, even as these Red Sea rivals cultivated independent traditions and pursued independent policies.¹¹⁴ The Sasanians and Chinese courts expended resources to gain influence in the succeeding Kidarite, Hephthalite, and Goktürk steppe empires, and counted them as subordinate “barbarians” despite their often worrying military power.

While often dominated by imperial juggernauts, these interstitial and peripheral elites also cleverly crafted independent expressions of power and identity that responded to and balanced the imperial claims. Gifts given in the course of regular embassies were visually rich and symbolically laden in order to reinforce the diplomatic discourse. The many Sasanian silver vessels that served as diplomatic gifts to foreign and internal potentates often visually supported the hierarchy by portraying the act of investing a client. Despite the subordinate positions the world empires assigned them, the peoples in between the empires would often shrewdly balance the marks of distinction of the grand imperial strategies, tactically subverting them. For example, the right to invest the king of Lazika with his insignia (*ta symbola*) was written explicitly into treaties between the Romans and Persians (such as that of 298), and it continued to be contested as they challenged each other’s ascendancy over the kingdom.¹¹⁵ However, when the king of Lazika, Tzath, came to Constantinople,

the Emperor [Justin I], received him with joy, baptized him and made him his son. He married a Roman woman, a certain Valeriana, the granddaugh-

ter of Nomos the patrician and *kouropalatēs*, and he took her to his own land, after having been invested by Justin as King of the Laz. He wore a crown and royal white *chlamys* which carried a gold *tablion* on which, in the center, was depicted an image of the Emperor Justin; and his white tunic had a golden collar with an image of the Emperor. But his boots [*tzaggia*] were red and had pearls in the Persian manner...¹¹⁶

While his regalia incorporated him thoroughly into the Roman hierarchy, Tzath's boots preserved his status in the Persian one.¹¹⁷

From fragmentary textual evidence and coinage, it appears that the late antique Hunnic empires of Bactria and northern India, often the dominant party militarily, appropriated and manipulated the marks of distinction of their Roman, Sasanian, or Gupta counterparts. On fifth-century Gandharan coin issues the ruler named "Kidara" deliberately appropriated the personal crown of Yazdgerd II (r. 438–57), the same Sasanian king whom Priscus reports stopped paying tribute payments to the Kidarites.¹¹⁸ Late fifth- and sixth-century Hephthalite coins are more subtle, displaying regalia derived, but not identical, to the Sasanian crown, balanced with nomadic or South Asian elements such as a drinking cup or club.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, we do not have archaeological evidence from the grave tumuli in which Procopius says the Hephthalites buried their kings.¹²⁰

In Aksum, which considered itself to be on equal footing with Rome, a Greek inscription on a monumental marble throne decorated with statues of gods in the harbor city of Adulis extolled the deeds of an Aksumite king.¹²¹ After describing his campaigns the king declares:

I am the first and only of [...] my predecessors to have subdued all these peoples by the grace given me by my mighty god Ares, who also engendered me. It is through him that I have submitted to my power all the peoples neighboring my empire [...] When I had re-established peace in the world which is subject to me I came to Adulis to sacrifice for the safety of those who navigate on the sea, to Zeus, Ares and Poseidon. After uniting and reassembling my armies I set up here this throne and consecrated it to Ares, in the twenty-seventh year of my reign.¹²²

Steles with trilingual inscriptions set up by King Ezana (ca. 320s–ca. 360s) in Aksum's imperial center are remarkably similar.¹²³ However, given its reference to "those who navigate on the sea," and location in a port city, the intended audience of the inscription in Adulis presumably included diplomats and merchants who traveled to and from Rome, Iran, and India. The Aksumite sovereign was indeed

successful in his goal as the inscription was copied and circulated; we know of its existence from the writings of Cosmas Indicopleustes, a late antique merchant from Alexandria who later became a monk.

Considering that it received embassies from the Roman and Sasanian empires and strove for a higher international profile, it is no surprise that Aksum was conversant with the “standard” international protocol of the day. To judge by the eyewitness account of one of Justinian I’s envoys, the diplomatic reception ceremony and gifting customs at the court of the early sixth-century Aksumite king Kaleb Ella Aṣbeḥa were very similar to those that existed between the Roman and Sasanian courts.¹²⁴ The pomp of Aksumite court rituals certainly rivaled reception ceremonies in Constantinople, Ctesiphon, and Chang’an. During the time of Justin I (r. 518–27), the “four towered” palace of the king of Aksum was decorated by four brass statues of unicorns and Justinian I’s envoy witnessed Kaleb Ella Aṣbeḥa appearing on a chariot decked with golden wreaths and drawn by four elephants.¹²⁵ The archaeological remains from the site of Aksum indicate a grand urban environment that greeted foreign envoys.¹²⁶

The nascent Japanese empire, although very influenced by Chinese culture, chafed at its implied subordinate status. Under the Sui dynasty it attempted to establish a diplomatic and ritual world that placed it at the ceremonial center, modeled, ironically, on Chinese protocol.¹²⁷ The Japanese chancellery deliberately engineered misunderstandings in diplomatic correspondence in order to write official letters that outwardly conformed to Chinese verbal and ideological hierarchies, while maintaining the trappings of symbolic equality with China internally.¹²⁸ Indeed, Japan’s assertion that its emperor was the “son of heaven,” although superficially a direct challenge to Chinese hegemony, was in practice more of a symbolic tool used to structure a new centralized state. The Sui court initially missed the signs of Japan’s new pretension; however, even when the Tang court noticed the changed state of affairs, it diplomatically ignored them, as Japan was relatively unimportant to its geopolitical concerns in East Asia.¹²⁹

While empires like those of Aksum and Japan attempted to compete directly with Rome, Persia, and China, the Sogdians seemed to relish their unique place as mediators between the great empires.¹³⁰ It would not be an overstatement to assert that the Sogdians were the primary catalyst for exchange in the late antique world. With their incredible mercantile reach and varied political involvement with the Tang, Goktürk, Persian, and Roman empires, the Sogdians cultivated an especially cosmopolitan view of their place in the world, which was reflected in their courtly art. The murals of King Varkuman at Samarkand provide a precious view of a people who, albeit briefly, lived at the center of Eurasian trade and politics.¹³¹ Still subject to competing analyses, at their core these mid-seventh-century murals depict for-

eign rulers and envoys visiting the court of a Sogdian king as well as mythological scenes.¹³² A passage from the history of the Tang dynasty describes a Sogdian royal pavilion in a seventh-century Sogdian city state to the west of Samarkand.¹³³ The pavilion reportedly carried images of envoys arriving from all major powers. The western wall portrayed the Persians and Romans, the northern wall Chinese, and the eastern wall Turks and Indians, which reflects, quite closely, the murals of the palace at Afrāsīab.¹³⁴ The textile patterns on the clothing of the Sogdian aristocrats in these paintings incorporate ornamental motifs from a variety of traditions, yielding an overall impression of visual richness and cosmopolitan aristocratic tastes.¹³⁵

Conclusion

The processes of cross-cultural interaction between the courts of Rome, Sasanian Iran, and Sui–Tang China were primarily concerned with the formation and maintenance of imperial identity. They could unfold according to the internal concerns of the empire, or, especially in the extremely intimate relationship of Rome and Iran, collaboratively and agonistically. Intensely interested in establishing hierarchical order and an internal image of dominance, the sovereigns of these empires used a variety of ritual, visual, and discursive techniques to appropriate each other's cultural and ideological goods and express and enact competitive statements. The end result of these processes of cross-cultural interaction was not just the exchange of cultural material but, at various times throughout their mutual histories, the fusion of the two realms' ritual-visual practices to form an extra-cultural and extra-religious language of debate and legitimacy.

The Roman and Sasanian courts were bound together in more intimate and frequent exchanges than either experienced with China, and consequently their court cultures initially experienced a higher degree of integration, both in terms of court ritual and visual culture. While this phenomenon was not always a linear or permanent development, it was in a certain sense cumulative, as even during the inevitable periods of enmity the Romans and Sasanians were not only able to communicate, but to formulate their statements of aggression and hostility in increasingly similar language. After the Sasanian court fled to China, the remnants of the dynasty were literally integrated into the Tang courtly system. Diplomatic interactions again provide the clearest examples of this process, as it was through them that the two courts' ritual systems met and became one. For a brief window of time the sovereigns of several overlapping cultural and political spheres not only became aware of each other's court practices, insignia, and modes of discourse but expressed power in forms that all courts could understand.

NOTES

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- 1 The period under study lies on the divide between Bentley's "classical" and "post-classical" periods: J. H. Bentley, "Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (1996): 749–70, esp. 61–63.
- 2 See K. R. Dark, "Globalizing Late Antiquity: Models, Metaphors and the Realities of Long-Distance Trade and Diplomacy," and other essays in *Incipient Globalization? Long-Distance Contacts in the Sixth Century*, ed. Anthea Harris (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), 3–14. Insofar as they focus on situations of cultural contact, these endeavors differ from literary studies such as G. Parker, *The Making of Roman India: Greek Culture in the Roman World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) or comparative studies, for example, F.-H.

Mutschler and A. Mittag, eds., *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

- 3 This article is a theoretical complement to my work on the history of competition and exchange in the art and ritual of kingship between the late Roman empire and Sasanian Iran, and experiments with extending these analyses to the Sui–Tang empire: M. Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran*, *Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 45 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 One of the clearer definitions of the concept is given in P. Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 47: "Symbolic capital is any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value.... More precisely, symbolic capital is the form taken by any species of capital whether it is perceived through categories of perception that are the product of the embodiment of divisions or of oppositions inscribed in the structure of the distribution of this species of capital (strong/weak, large/small, rich/poor, cultured/uncultured)." See the extended discussion of ancient and medieval elites' desire for distinction and cross-cultural exchange in the introduction to this volume.
- 6 Dark, "Globalizing Late Antiquity," 3–14.
- 7 See the introduction to this volume for discussion of theories of world-systems and the possibilities and dangers of applying it to the premodern world.
- 8 For a useful overview of the economic and military scale of the two empires, see J.

- Howard-Johnston, "The Two Great Powers in Late Antiquity: A Comparison," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III: States, Resources and Armies*, ed. A. Cameron (Princeton, N.J.: The Darwin Press, 1995), 157–226.
- 9 J. Grenet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, trans. J. R. Foster and C. Hartman, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 252–56.
 - 10 A useful overview is provided by W. Watson, "Iran and China," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3.1, ed. E. Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 537–58.
 - 11 Grenet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, 253–56.
 - 12 Ibid., 127–28, 133.
 - 13 P. A. Boodberg, "Marginalia to the Histories of the Northern Dynasties," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 3, nos. 3/4 (1938): 223–43.
 - 14 The official Tang histories record that an embassy from the Roman emperor brought emeralds and rubies. If it did take place, it is likely that it was carried out by a "freelance" merchant ambassador (see below). *Jiu Tang shu* 34; *Xin Tang shu* 42; H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1866), 1:54–55.
 - 15 The Kuṣāṇa rulers of Central Asia and northern India, against whom the Sasanians campaigned, appear not to have invested as much effort in establishing diplomatic relations with the Chinese courts as the Sasanians. Only one embassy (in 230) is recorded and the Sasanian conquest of much of the Kuṣāṇa lands went unnoticed in Chinese sources: E. G. Pullyblank, "Chinese–Iranian Relations i. In Pre-Islamic Times," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*; Grenet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, 201. Nevertheless, the excavated remains of the Kuṣāṇa treasury in Bagram indicated they enjoyed imported Chinese lacquer in addition to Indian bone and ivory carving and Roman glass. See the studies collected in the dossier "Begram et les routes commerciales," in *Topoi* 11, no. 1 (2003): 357ff.
 - 16 Diplomatic exchanges are listed in Pullyblank, "Chinese–Iranian Relations." There is more detailed discussion in P. Daffinà, "La Persia sassanide secondo le fonti cinesi," *Rivista degli studi orientali* 72 (1983): 121–70.
 - 17 After the dissolution of the Sasanian empire, members of the court fled to Constantinople and Chang'an, establishing two centers of (ultimately vain) resistance and agitation for the resurrection of the empire: W. Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 207–208. Primary source evidence of the presence and integration of the Persian aristocracy under the Tang is found in J. Harmatta, "The Middle-Persian Chinese Bilingual Inscription from Hsian and the Chinese–Sasanian Relations," in *Convegno internazionale sul tema la nel Medioevo* (Roma: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1970), 363–76; A. Forte, "On the Identity of Aluohan (616–710) a Persian Aristocrat at the Chinese Court," in *Convegno internazionale sul tema la Persia e l'Asia centrale da Alessandro al X secolo* (Roma: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1996), 187–97; P. Pelliot, *L'Inscription nestorienne de Si-ngan-fou*, ed. with supplements by Antonio Forte (Kyoto: Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale; Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1996), esp. 249–410; and M. Compareti, "The Last Sasanians in China," *Eurasian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2003), 197–213.
 - 18 J. Vogt, *Orbis Romanus: Zur Terminologie des römischen Imperialismus*, Philosophie und Geschichte 22 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1929), 23–32; U. Asche, *Roms Weltherrschaftsidee und Aussenpolitik in der Spätantike im Spiegel der Panegyrici Latini*, Habelts Dissertationsdrucke: Reihe alte Geschichte 16 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1983), 7–47; A. Mastino, "Orbis, Kosmos, Oikoumenē: aspetti spaziali dell'idea di impero universale da Augusto a Teodosio," in *Popoli e Spazio romano tra Diritto e Profezia*, Da Roma alla Terza Roma Documenti e Studi 3 (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1986), 63–162.
 - 19 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 59–63. For an accessible introduction to ancient Iranian religion and Zoroastrianism, see M. Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 16–17.
 - 20 H. J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 10–20.
 - 21 Wang Zhenping, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals: China–Japan Relations in the Han–Tang Period* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 216–28; Pan Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan: Sui–Tang China and Its Neighbors* (Bellingham: W. Washington University, 1997), 75–81.
 - 22 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 115–17.
 - 23 This could, at the very least, refer to the more integrated status of the Sasanian court in exile, which continued to send "embassies" well into the eighth century: Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 115 and n. 86; Daffinà, "La Persia sassanide secondo le fonti cinesi," 136–39.
 - 24 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 117.
 - 25 The Roman, Sasanian, and Chinese sovereigns did not believe their opponent

- was actually submitting, but rather used the appearance of envoys for internal propaganda purposes.
- 26 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 22–30.
- 27 Such “freelance” envoys appear to have had the advantage of being culturally aware. For example, a Persian embassy to the court of the Liang even offered a “tooth of the Buddha”; Daffinà, “La Persia sassanide secondo le fonti cinesi,” 127 and n. 15. Indemnities the Romans paid the Persians, especially those for the defense of the Daryal Pass, were an especially sensitive issue between the empires: Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 27, 53, 124, and 292 n. 12.
- 28 Pullyblank, “Chinese–Iranian Relations”; Grenet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, 131–33; Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 28–32.
- 29 Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 35–37.
- 30 Ibid. Nicholas Sims-Williams, “The Sogdian Merchants in China and India,” in *Cina e Iran da Alessandro Magno alla dinastia Tang*, ed. A. Cadonna and L. Lanciotti (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1996), 45–67.
- 31 Xia Nai, “Sassanian Objects Recently Found in China,” *Social Sciences in China* 1, no. 2 (1980): 153–61. An intriguing non-imperial Chinese expression of objectification and integration, not of Persian motifs, but of images of Iranian peoples, is discussed in J. G. Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T’ang Dynasty of China*, Serie orientale Roma 20 (Rome: ISIMEO, 1959); see also Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, plate 8. For more on the Sogdians, see note 130 below.
- 32 Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 242–49; Liu Xinru, *The Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Interactions in Eurasia* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1998).
- 33 Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 234–42; J. H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30–69.
- 34 Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 85–87.
- 35 W. Hage, *Das Orientalische Christentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), 291. For further background, see S. de Courtois, *Chrétiens d’orient sur la route de la soie: dans les pas des nestoriens* (Paris: Table ronde, 2007); I. Gillman and H. J. Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
- 36 Procop. *Goth.* 4.17; Theoph. *AM* 4.270. For an overview of late Roman/Byzantine silk, see A. Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 1997); D. Jacoby, “Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (2004): 197–240, esp. 198–99.
- 37 S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992); idem, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).
- 38 Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai’i Press, 2003); Liu Xinru, *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges A.D. 1–600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- 39 G. W. Bowersock, “The Ḥaḍramawt between Persia and Byzantium,” in *La Persia e Bisanzio* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2004), 263–75. Primary sources on Aksum are collected in S. Burstein, ed., *Ancient African Civilizations: Kush and Axum* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener, 1998), 103–26.
- 40 K. Ashley and V. Plesch, eds., “The Cultural Processes of ‘Appropriation,’” special issue of *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32, no.1 (2002): 6.
- 41 See the introduction to this volume for more detailed discussion of the possibilities and difficulties of applying contemporary critical theory to ancient and medieval material and situations.
- 42 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 7–33; Shang-Tseh Chou, “Emperorship Redefined: Developments of the State Ritual Program in Seventh Century China” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2003). See also Joseph P. McDermott, ed., *State and Court Ritual in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), with contributions ranging from the first millennium BCE to the eighteenth century; and D. D. McMullen, *State and Scholars in Tang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 113–58.
- 43 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 7–33.
- 44 “Strategic predication” is a phrase inspired by J. W. Fernandez’ account of the role of metaphor in culture. I put the emphasis on 1) the rhetorical act and 2) the calculation behind the process rather than the specific metaphorical practices. “Persuasive metaphors,” writes Fernandez, “situate us and others with whom we interact.” A metaphor is “a strategic predication” which “makes a movement and leads to a performance”: J. W. Fernandez, *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 8. For context, see the extended discussion of the role of practice in critical theory in the introduction to this volume.
- 45 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 55–71.
- 46 Ibid., 258 n. 11.
- 47 ŠKZ 1–5; G. Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on Its Origins* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989, 136–48).

- 48 H. P. Laubscher, *Die Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki*, Archäologische Forschungen 1 (Berlin: Mann, 1975); M. Pond-Rothman, "The Thematic Organization of the Panel Reliefs on the Arch of Galerius," *American Journal of Archaeology* 81, no. 4 (1977): 427–54; H. Meyer, "Die Frieszyklen des sogenannten Triumphalbogens des Galerius in Thessaloniki: Kriegschronik und Ankündigung der zweiten Tetrarchie," *JDAI* 95 (1980): 374–444; E. Mayer, *Rom ist dort, wo der Kaiser ist: Untersuchungen zu den Staatsdenkmälern des dezentralisierten Reiches von Diocletian bis zu Theodosius II*, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Monographien 53 (Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Press, 2002), 47–65; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 83–99.
- 49 T. Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China*, 618–907 (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 1 and 16–25; Xianeng Yang, *New Perspectives on China's Past: Chinese Archaeology in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 2:404–9.
- 50 Images of foreign envoys or the emperor receiving them reaffirmed China's central place in the world and were especially popular under the early Tang, appearing not only in funerary art but in scroll painting. For example, see Yan Liben's handscroll, "Western Barbarians Bringing Tribute of Various Kinds, such as Strange Animals and Stones, to the Emperor" and "Foreign Rulers Bringing Tribute"; Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China*, 113.
- 51 Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China*, 17.
- 52 "Their triangular groupings form a compositional barrier between the foreigners and the court, heightening a sense of who is 'Chinese and alien,' 'superior and vassal': Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China*, 111–12. Although, as far as we know, the Romans did not send an official embassy, for ideological purposes the Chinese included Romans as part of the submissive western states. Persians, Koreans, Japanese, and Mongols have also been identified among these groupings of foreigners.
- 53 Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China*, 24.
- 54 M. Compareti, "The Last Sasanians in China," 203.
- 55 D. McMullen, "Bureaucrats and Cosmology: The Ritual Code of T'ang China," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. D. Cannadine and S. Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 181–236, esp. 211; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 122–53.
- 56 We are extremely fortunate to have Peter the Patrician's record of the sixth-century Roman court's protocol for receiving a "Great Embassy of the Persians," which Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos included in his tenth-century compilation *De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. and Latin trans. J. J. Reiske, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 2 vols (Bonn: E. Weberi, 1829–30). The late Sasanian compilations of protocol (*ā'in-nāma*, Middle Persian *ēwēn-nāmag*, "book of customs" and *gāh-nāmag*, "book of court ceremony") likely contained similar protocols; however, they are lost to us, known only from their reflections in Islamic-era literature, such as the *Šahnāma* and pseudo al-Jāhiz's "Book of the Crown", trans. C. Pellat as *Le Livre de la Couronne* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1954). Reception ritual (*bīn lī*) was one of the five categories of ritual in the Sui and Tang empires, which were compiled in a number of treatises. Completed in 732, *The Kaiyuan Ritual Code* modified previous ritual works and became the standard compilation of Tang court ritual: McMullen, *State and Scholars in Tang China*, 132–36; idem, "Bureaucrats and Cosmology"; O. Moore, "The Ceremony of Gratitude," in McDermott, *State and Court Ritual in China*, 199–200.
- 57 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 116.
- 58 Under the Sui and early Tang, *Honglu Si* (The Court of State Ceremonial), a part of the *Li Bu* (Ministry of Rites), managed diplomatic exchange and reception rituals (known as the *Sibin Si*, "Court of Guests," after 684): Pan, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, 75–81; Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 111–21. In the late Roman empire, records of diplomatic exchange were preserved by the *scrinium barbarorum* (Office of the Barbarians). The *magister officiorum* (Greek *magistros tōn ophphikiōn*), an official involved in many aspects of aulic ritual, managed the Sasanian envoy's visit and himself was responsible for greeting him, arranging his lodging, and conducting the ritual protocol involved in his visit. During the actual reception, the *khartoularioi tōn barbarōn* (translators) and the *admissionalis* (officials in charge of admission) seem to have supervised the envoy's activities within the audience hall: *De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae* 1.89.404–5; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 30–31 and 155; A. Kazhdan, "Magister Officiorum," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 2:1267. A likely Sasanian official would be the *darigān sālār* early on (ŠKZ 48) or the *handēmāngarān sālār* later, while in the *Šahnāma* this figure is the *sālār-e bār*: Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Bār"; P. Gignoux, "Court and Courtiers ii. In the Parthian and Sasanian Periods," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (1993), available at www.iranica.com.
- 59 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*; H. Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 589–1276 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7.

- 60 Ibn-Balki, *Fārsnāma*, ed. G. Le Strange and R. A. Nicholson (London: Luzac & Co., 1921), 97. Translation mine.
- 61 Ṭabarī 2447; *The History of al-Ṭabarī Vol. 13, The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, and Egypt*, trans. G. H. A. Juynboll (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 26–27.
- 62 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 115–31.
- 63 Ibid., 115.
- 64 S. Diebler, “Les hommes du roi: Sur la représentation souveraine dans les relations diplomatiques entre Byzance et les Sassanides d’après les historiens byzantins du sixième siècle,” *Studia Iranica* 24 (1995): 187–218, esp. 208–9; Ibn-Balki, *Fārsnāma*, 97.
- 65 Diebler, “Les hommes du roi,” 208–9; R. C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy: Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1992), 115–16.
- 66 Procop. *Pers.* 2.28.40–43.
- 67 For example, in 579 Hormizd IV imprisoned Tiberius’ envoys and harassed them on their return voyage: Menander Protector, *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. and trans. R. C. Blockley (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1985), frg. 41; K. Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien in ihren diplomatisch-völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen im Zeitalter Justinians* (Berlin: J. Guttentag, 1906), 25. Kōsrow II imprisoned Lilius, Phocas’ envoy who had been sent, as was customary, to announce the usurpers’ accession of the Byzantine throne: Theoph. Simok. 8.15.7. He also flogged to death Heraclius’ envoys upon learning of the Roman emperor’s invasion: Nikeph. 15, Mango trans., 62–63.
- 68 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 121–24.
- 69 Dealt with in depth in Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, ch. 7, “Weight and Nuances in State Letters.”
- 70 Peter the Patrician, frg. 13. Translation mine.
- 71 Sebeos, trans. Thomson, 79–80. Heraclius, in turn, appears to have capitalized on Kōsrow’s belligerence in order to mobilize his army, clergy, and population to war, a step that previous emperors had largely shunned; see the discussion of this passage in Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium*, 122–25.
- 72 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 154–66; Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 7; Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 122–23, 130–31.
- 73 Dealt with in detail in Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 154–66.
- 74 Pan, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, 76–77; Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 130–31; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 31 and 155.
- 75 The term “appropriation” has proved useful across a number of disciplines including art history, as witnessed by Pratima Rao’s select bibliography for a collection of essays on the subject, in which music/musicology, art, writing, colonial/post-colonial discourse, popular culture, science, and law are represented; Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao, eds., *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 321–24. In the field of art history, Robert S. Nelson approaches the term in the context of a power differential but also makes a case for its general usefulness by reminding us that appropriation puts the stress on the social utility of the art object and, unlike “traditional terms of art history—for example ‘influence’—considering appropriation shifts the inquiry toward the active agents of signification in society and illumines historical context”: Robert S. Nelson, “Appropriation,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, 2nd edition, ed. R. Nelson and R. Shiff (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2003), 172. The essays collected by Kathleen Ashley and Véronique Plesch contribute to the critical understanding of appropriation and fortuitously concentrate on premodern concerns. They consciously depart from the reductive postcolonial understanding of appropriation as strictly coercive and damaging, and begin to consolidate a usage of the term that relates more directly to the theoretical interests of the premodern world. Most importantly, they move the focus onto the creative aspects of the process of appropriation: Ashley and Plesch, “The Cultural Processes of ‘Appropriation,’” 6–12. See the introduction to this volume for the problem of “activist scholarship.”
- 76 Ziff and Rao, *Borrowed Power*, 1 and 24–5.
- 77 Ashley and Plesch, “The Cultural Processes of ‘Appropriation,’” 6.
- 78 Cf. *ibid.*, 3 and 12.
- 79 C. Mango, “The Temple Mount, AD 614–638,” in *Bayt al-Maqdis: ‘Abd al-Malik’s Jerusalem*, ed. J. Raby and J. Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1–16; A. Frolov, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, Archives de l’Orient Chétien 7 (Paris: Institut français d’Études Byzantines, 1961), 56–58, 191; Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium*, 78 and 179. See the introduction to this volume for a discussion of object agency.
- 80 Procop. *Pers.* 2.11.31–36; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 172–73.
- 81 See Compareti, “The Last Sasanians in China”; Heraclius: *De cer.* 2.28, 628–29; Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium*, 267.
- 82 T. Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 223–26; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 174–82; V. L. Bower and C. MacKenzie, “Polo: The Emperor of Games,” in *Asian Games: The Art of Contest*, ed. C. Mackenzie and I.

- Finkel (New York: Asia Society, 2004), 223–303; V. L. Bower, “Polo in Tang China: Sport and Art,” *Asian Art* 4, no. 3 (1991): 23–45; J. C. Liu, “Polo and Cultural Change: From T’ang to Sung China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45, no. 1 (1985): 203–224; A. Lo, “Double Sixes, Holding Spears, and the Long March: Games of the Backgammon Family in China,” in Mackenzie and Finkel, *Asian Games*, 97–111.
- 83 Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China*, 118–20.
- 84 For an important and wide-ranging account of ornament and its uses in a variety of visual cultures and in the discipline of art history, see J. Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); idem, *The Language of Ornament* (London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001). For an account of the role of ornament in the development of art historiography, see F. L. Kroll, *Das Ornament in der Kunsttheorie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim, Zurich, New York: Georg Olms, 1987); and the essays in I. Frank and F. Hartung, eds., *Die Rhetorik des Ornaments* (Munich: Fink, 2001).
- 85 Witness the opinions of J. Elsner, “The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901,” *Art History* 25, no. 3 (2002): 358–379; and M. Olin, “Art History and Ideology: Alois Riegl and Josef Strzygowski,” in *Cultural Visions: Essays in the History of Culture*, ed. P. S. Gold and B. C. Sax, Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft 41 (Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), 151–70. Despite his eminence during his lifetime, this estimation was also held by some of his contemporaries, such as Bernard Berenson, who dubbed him, “the Attila of art history”: see Udo Kultermann, *The History of Art History* (New York: Abaris Books, 1993), 165. The understanding of Strzygowski’s role in historiography has benefited especially from the work of Christina Maranci, *Medieval Armenian Architecture: Constructions of Race and Nation* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001). Given our field’s collective progress in the last decade in understanding the academy’s role in the rise and support of the Third Reich, it was troubling to encounter the following attempt by a hostile anonymous reviewer of the present article to trivialize Strzygowski’s Nazism: “I believe we should all refrain from calling such a non-conformist thinker who looked at post-cuneiform Near Eastern cultures at times when nearly nobody had taken a look before as ‘villain,’ whether he later became a fascist or not.” It appears it is still not superfluous to remind ourselves of the importance of critically examining the Nazism of many of Strzygowski’s generation to understand its impact on their scholarship, even if one admires their contributions. It is no longer an open question that Strzygowski’s early ideology, later Nazism, and scholarly output were intertwined: C. Maranci, “Armenian Architecture as Aryan Architecture: The Role of Indo-European Scholarship in the Theories of Josef Strzygowski,” *Visual Resources* 13 (1999): 361–78. Strzygowski’s *volksische* drive eventually joined that of others under the aegis of National Socialism (he was an active member of the Deutsche-Soziale Volksbund of Vienna and one of his books was a textbook in the Adolf-Hitler Schule). Strzygowski was not alone in his anti-Semitism and enthusiasm for National Socialism, nor was it exclusively attractive to disenfranchised “para-academic” scholars. These included Julius von Schlosser, Hans Sedlmayr (who discussed the advantages of constructing a *Hitlerstadt* on the former Jewish ghetto — the same site where Strzygowski had lobbied passionately, yet unsuccessfully, to have a “Persian” and thus “Aryan” fire temple erected: Olin, “Art History and Ideology,” 169 n. 113) and Wilhelm Pinder (who, in an article entitled “Deutsche Kunstgeschichte” [1939] was hopeful that the removal of Jews from academia would also cleanse art history of excessively “conceptual” thinking and claimed that “those unable to understand him did so because they did not have enough *Volksisch* blood in them”); Lee Sorensen, ed., “Pinder, Wilhelm,” *Dictionary of Art Historians* online, www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/pinderw.htm; C. Wood, “Introduction,” to *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s* (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 30 and 36; Olin, “Art History and Ideology,” 151–70. On para-academics, see S. Marchand, “The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism: The Case of Josef Strzygowski,” *History and Theory* 33 (1994): 106–30; and Bernard Mees, *The Science of the Swastika* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 1–9.
- 86 O. Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 38; Bollingen Series 35 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 37–40.
- 87 Kroll, *Das Ornament in der Kunsttheorie des 19. Jahrhunderts*; Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, 247 n. 39.
- 88 Several early theorists were curators, their theoretical work an outgrowth of their contact and expertise with a certain corpus of objects. Riegl’s work with oriental tapestries at the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie informed *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (Berlin, 1893). More directly, W. H. Goodyear’s work as Keeper of the Egyptian Collection

of the Brooklyn Museum informed the developmental thesis in his *The Grammar of the Lotus: A New History of Classic Ornament as a Development of Sun Worship* (London: 1891). See also E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*, 2nd edition (London: Phaidon Press, 1984; repr. 1998), 181–82.

89 For the more nefarious kind of implicit bias, one need only look as far as Strzygowski's theories of degeneracy and decline, which he supported by careful taxonomies of form: Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1901); Maranci, "Armenian Architecture as Aryan Architecture"; idem., *Medieval Armenian Architecture: Constructions of Race and Nation*, Hebrew University Armenian Studies 2 (Leuven and Sterling, Va.: Peeters, 2001).

90 An example of the former is R. Kautzsch's *Kapitellstudien: Beiträge zu einer Geschichte des spätantiken Kapitells im Osten vom vierten bis ins siebente Jahrhundert* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1936), which sought to document the development of the classical capital. This monumental endeavor became problematic when it reached late antiquity. Here Kautzsch continued to impose a (now speciously) neat linear developmental organization on late Roman column capitals, at times relying for evidence of date solely on his evolutionary hypothesis, which owed quite a bit to Riegl: Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, 208n. Ernst Kitzinger continued this sort of circular reasoning in citing Kautzsch's tidy evolutionary order as proof of his own conviction that late antique decorative sculpture changed according to an "almost irresistible inner logic": E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making:*

Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art 3rd–7th Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 79; Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, 180–97.

91 Maranci, "Armenian Architecture as Aryan Architecture"; idem., *Medieval Armenian Architecture*. For a fascinating overview of these problems see P. L. Kohl and C. Fawcett, eds., *Nationalism, Politics and the Practice of Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). On the topic of Nazi archaeology within this volume, see B. Arnold and H. Hassmann, "Archaeology in Nazi Germany: The Legacy of the Faustian Bargain," 70–81; and D. W. Anthony, "Nazi and Eco-Feminist Prehistories," 82–96; on Soviet archaeology and Russian nationalism, see V. A. Shnirelman, "From Internationalism to Nationalism," 120–38; E. N. Chernykh, "Postscript: Russian Archaeology after the Collapse of the USSR," 139–48; and on China, Enzheng Tong, "Thirty Years of Chinese Archaeology (1949–1979)," 177–97; L. von Falkenhausen, "The Regionalist Paradigm in Chinese Archaeology," 198–217.

92 In *The Sense of Order*, Gombrich explores how humans understand their visual world and posits that we have an inherited disposition to seek and establish order in our visual environment. He contends that ornament has a unique vocation and focuses on the role of human choice and perception in perpetuating or even radically altering visual traditions. This provides a useful interpretative space that can accommodate discussion of the effects of ornament's social, political, and economic vectors. Oleg Grabar's *Mediation of Ornament*, now almost twenty years old, still offers one of the most penetrating contemplations of this subject. Focusing on ornament's cognitive and aesthetic functions, his analyses

center on ornament as a "necessary manner of compelling a relationship between objects or works of art and viewers and users": Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, 40–46, 226, 230.

93 Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, 41; Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective*, 75.

94 Recent studies have remarked on ornament's role in displaying social rank within a society: see especially M. J. Powers, *Pattern and Person: Ornament, Society and Self in Classical China*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 262 (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Asia Center; Harvard University Press, 2006), 158–66; Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective*, 75–83.

95 Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, 230.

96 On Iranian and Roman material in China, see Mei-Ling Chen, "The Importation of Byzantine and Sasanian Glass into China during the Fourth to Sixth Centuries," in Harris, *Incipient Globalization?*, 47–52; Anthea Harris, "Britain and China at the Opposite Ends of the World? Archaeological Methodology and Long-Distance Contacts in the Sixth Century," in Harris, *Incipient Globalization?*, 91–104; Xianeng, *New Perspectives on China's Past*, 2:365–87, 410–15, 422–25; A. E. Dien, "Western Exotica in China during the Six Dynasties Period," in Xianeng, *New Perspectives on China's Past*, 1:363–79; Compareti, "The Last Sasanians in China"; idem., "Iranian Deities in the Decoration of Some Dulan and Astana Silks," *Annali di Ca'Foscari* 39, no. 3 (2000): 331–68; Laing, "Recent Finds of Western-Related Glassware," 1–18; M. Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, "Pour une archéologie des échanges. Apports étrangers en Chine: transmission, réception, assimilation," *Arts Asiatiques* 49 (1994): 21–33; F. Thierry, "Sur les monnaies sassanides trouvées en Chine," in *Circulation des monnaies, des marchan-*

dises et des biens, Res orientales 5, ed. R. Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-orient; Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 89–139; J. Rawson, "Central Asian Silver and Its Influence on Chinese Ceramics," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 5 (1991): 139–51; P. O. Harper, "An Iranian Silver Vessel in the Tomb of Feng Hetu," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 4 (1990): 51–59; J. Rawson, *The Ornament on Chinese Silver of the Tang Dynasty*, British Museum Occasional Paper 40 (London: British Museum, 1982); Xia Nia, "Sassanian Objects," 153–61; Watson, "Iran and China," 547–58; D. Shepherd, "Iran between East and West," in *East-West in Art: Patterns of Cultural and Aesthetic Relationships* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), 84–105. For the literature on the tombs of Sogdian aristocrats in China, see the articles by Bonnie Cheng and Kate Lingley in this volume. On Iran and Rome, see Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 188–223; various papers in *La Persia e Bisanzio*, Atti dei Convegni Lincei 201 (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2004), including M. Compareti, "Evidence of Mutual Exchange between Byzantine and Sogdian Art," 865–921; F. De' Maffei, "Il problema della cupola su vano quadrato e la Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli," 679–735; R. Favaro, "Sull'iconografia Bizantina della stella dei Magi di Betlemme," 827–863; G. Macchiarella, "Sull'iconografia dei simboli del potere tra Bisanzio, la Persia e l'Islam," 595–631; E. Russo, "La scultura di S. Polieucto e la presenza della Persia nella cultura artistica di Costantinopoli nel VI secolo," 737–826; P. O. Harper, "The Gilded Silver Vessel: Iran and Byzantium in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries AD," in *Of Pots and Pans: Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria*, ed. L. al-Gailani Werr et al. (London:

NABU, 2002), 113–27; M. Mundell-Mango, "Byzantine, Sasanian and Central Asian Silver," in *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe in 6.–7. Jh.*, ed. Cs. Bálint, *Varia Achaelologica Hungarica* 10 (Budapest, Naples and Rome: Paulus-Publishing, 2000), 267–84; G. Azarpay, "Sasanian Art Beyond the Persian Worlds" in *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian Periods: Rejection and revival 238 BC–AD 642*, ed. J. Curtis (London: British Museum Press, 2000), 67–75; A. Pagliaro, "La civiltà sāsānidica e i suoi riflessi in occidente," in *Atti del Convegno internazionale sul Tema: La Persia nel Medioevo*, Atti dei Convegni Lincei 160 (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1971), 19–35; A. Grabar, "Le rayonnement de l'art sassanide dans le monde chrétien," in *Atti del Convegno internazionale sul Tema: La Persia nel Medioevo*, 679–707.

- 97 Russo, "La scultura di S. Polieucto"; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 211–16. On the Xinghua hoard, see Xianeng, *New Perspectives on China's Past*, 2:410–413 with earlier bibliography.
- 98 The foundational study is B. Laufer, *Sino Iranica: Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran*, Field Museum Publication 201, Anthropological Series 15, no. 3 (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1919). See also E. H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of Tang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).
- 99 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 64.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 75–78.
- 101 Procopius, *The Persian Wars*, 2.6.1–9.7; 9.14–18.
- 102 Theoph. Simok. 5.6.10, trans. Whitby, 240.
- 103 Jens Kröger, "Ctesiphon," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (1993), www.iranica.com.
- 104 This could have well been the case in Kosrow I's palace as well; however, with

only scraps of archaeological and textual evidence, it seems prudent not to speculate on the manner in which the "Roman marble and mosaic" appeared in relation to Persian forms.

- 105 Rawson, "Central Asian Silver and Its Influence on Chinese Ceramics."
- 106 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 215–16. For a review of ornamental motifs beyond the specifically imperial context, see L. Pasquani, "Influenze dell'arte sasanide nell'Occidente mediterraneo: alcuni episodi decorative," in *Proceedings of the 5th Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europaea. Vol II Ancient and Middle Iranian Studies*, ed. A. Panaino and R. Zipoli (Milan: Mimesis, 2006), 645–60.
- 107 Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, "Pour une archéologie des échanges," 28–30; Rawson, "Central Asian Silver and Its Influence on Chinese Ceramics."
- 108 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 205–208. Although the Mediterranean witnessed circular ornamental motifs earlier, the pearl medallion (or roundel), often with animals in the center, did not become a global textile fashion until it was popularized by the Sasanians and mass-produced and spread by the Sogdians in the sixth and seventh centuries: M. Compareti, "Sasanian Textiles. An Iconographic Approach," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2009), www.iranica.com; idem, 2004; E. Kageyama, "Use and Production of Silk in Sogdiana," in *Ērān ud Anērān: Studies presented to Boris Ilich Marshak on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. M. Compareti, P. Raffetta, and G. Scarcia, *Transoxiana Webfestschrift Series I* (2003), <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/kageyama.html>; L. Feugère, "Some Remarks on a Silk Wrapper," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 6 (1999/2000): 241–44.

- 109 Azarpay, "Sasanian Art Beyond the Persian Worlds"; Grabar, "Le rayonnement de l'art sassanide dans le monde chrétien." For example, compare the nature of the early versus later graves examined by Laing, "Recent Finds of Western-Related Glassware".
- 110 Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History*.
- 111 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 17–32.
- 112 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 202–203; B. Dignas and E. Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity: Neighbors and Rivals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 163–81.
- 113 On Roman investiture of the Ghassanids, see Shahid 1995, 1.1: 103–9, 398–406, 518–20; C. E. Bosworth, "Arab i. Arabs and Iran in the Pre-Islamic Period," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (1987), available at www.iranica.com; Shahid "Ghassan." On the Huns, see E. Chrysos "The Title Basileus in Early Byzantine International Relations," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32 (1978), 50–51. For more poaching of client kings, see Malal. 413–16; Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 204–205.
- 114 Niall Finneran, "Ethiopian Christian Material Culture: The International Context. Aksum, the Mediterranean and the Syriac Worlds in the Fifth to Seventh Centuries," in Harris, *Incipient Globalization?*, 75–89.
- 115 Peter the Patrician, frg. 14, *FHG* 4:189; E. Winter, *Die sāsānidisch-römischen Friedensverträge des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der ausenpolitischen Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Grossmächten* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988): 47–49.
- 116 Theoph. AM 6015.168.26–27. cf. *Chron. Pasch.* 613–14 and Malal. 413.17–18.
- 117 On the development of red footwear as a cross-cultural mediator between Rome and Sasanian Iran see Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 201–204.
- 118 R. Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien*, 4 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967), 1:43–45, issues 11–14; Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 8, ed. Blockley 1983, 336–7; F. Grenet, "Kidarites," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2005), www.iranica.com.
- 119 For the coins of Lakhana of Udhyana and Napki Malka, see M. Atram, "Hunnish Coinage," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2004), www.iranica.com; Göbl, *Dokumente*, 2:89–91.
- 120 Procop. 1.3.1–7; A. D. H. Bivar, "Hephthalites," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2004), www.iranica.com.
- 121 For useful entries on the history and archaeology of Aksum, see D. W. Phillipson, *Ancient Ethiopia: Aksum, Its Antecedents and Successors* (London: British Museum Press, 1998); Stuart Munro-Hay, *Aksum: An African Civilization of Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991).
- 122 The inscription was preserved in Cosmas Indicopleustes' *Topographia Christiana*. Damage to the top of the inscription obliterated the name of the king and Cosmas incorrectly attributed it to Ptolemy II, who erected a separate inscription at the site: Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographia Christiana*, trans. W. Wolska-Conus as *Topographie chrétienne*, 3 vols. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968–73), 372–78; extracted by Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, 222–23. Similar inscriptions were excavated and studied by the German archaeological mission: E. Littman, *Sabaische, Griechische und Altabessinische Inschriften*, Deutsche Axumexpedition 4 (1913). The most important of these are also collected in Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, 221–32. D. W. Johnson, "Axum," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 1:239; Phillipson, *Ancient Ethiopia*, 122 and 150 n. 7.
- 123 Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, 224–25.
- 124 Malal. 457.
- 125 Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, 153, 170 and 219–20.
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- 127 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 146–49, 173–79, 222–27; C. von Verschuer, "Japan's Foreign Relations 600–1200 AD: A Translation from Zenrin Kokuhoki," *Monumenta Nipponica* 54, no. 1 (1999): 1–40.
- 128 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 173–97.
- 129 Wang, *Ambassadors from the Land of Immortals*, 226.
- 130 For aspects of Sogdian visual and material culture, see B. Marshak, "The Sarcophagus of Sabao Yu Hong: A Head of the Foreign Merchants (592–98)," *Orientalions* 35 (2004): 57–65; idem, "Central Asian Metalwork in China," in *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 AD*, ed. James C. Y. Watt et al., (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2004), 47–55; idem, "La thématique sogdienne dans l'art de la Chine de la seconde moitié du VI^e siècle," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* 145, no. 1 (2001): 227–64; idem, "A Sogdian Silver Bowl in the Freer Gallery of Art," *Ars Orientalis* 29 (1999): 101–10; F. Grenet, P. Rinoud, and Yang J., "Zoroastrian Scenes on a Newly Discovered Sogdian Tomb in Xi'an, Northern China," *Studia Iranica* 33 (2004): 273–84; A. L. Juliano, "Chinese Pictorial Space at the Cultural Crossroads," in *Ēran ud Anērān*, <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/juliano.html>; E. J. Laing, "Recent Finds of Western-Related Glassware, Textiles, and Metalwork in Central Asia and China,"

- Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 9 (1995): 1–18; M. Mode, “Sogdian Gods in Exile: Some Iconographic Evidence from Khotan in the Light of Recently Excavated Material from Sogdiana,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 2 (1991/2): 179–214. On viticulture, see E. Trombert, “La vigne et le vin en Chine. Misères et succès d’une tradition allogène,” *Journal Asiatique* 289 (2001): 285–327. On religion, F. Grenet and Guangda Zhang, “The Last Refuge of the Sogdian Religion: Dunhuang in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 10 (1996 [1998]): 175–86; J. Lerner, “Central Asians in Sixth-century China: a Zoroastrian Funerary Rite,” *Iranica Antiqua* 30 (1995): 179–90. See also Bonnie Cheng’s article in this volume.
- 131 In the mid-seventh century, Varkuman was invested by the Tang court as “governor of Samarkand and Sogdiana”; Matteo Compareti, “The Paintings Concerning Chinese Themes at Afrāsyāb,” in *The Chinese Scene at Afrāsyāb and the Iranian Calendar*, ed. Matteo Compareti and Simone Cristoforetti, *Eurasiatica* 78 (Venice: Cafoscarina, 2007), 11–32.
- 132 The town referred to in the *Tang shu* was Kušāniya. M. Mode, *Sogdien und die Herrscher der Welt: Türken, Sasaniden und Chinesen in Historiengemälden des 7. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. aus Alt-Samarqand*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 162 (Frankfurt am Main and New York: P. Lang, 1993), 20–24; idem, *Court Art of Sogdian Samarqand in the 7th Century AD: Some Remarks to an Old Problem*, <http://www.orientarch.uni-halle.de/ca/afras/index.htm> (accessed November 21, 2008); Compareti, “Afrāsyāb”; idem, “Afrāsīab ii. Wall Paintings,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (2009), available at www.iranica.com.
- 133 Mode, *Sogdien und die Herrscher der Welt*, 20–24; Compareti “Afrāsīab.”
- 134 Mode, *Court Art of Sogdian Samarqand*.
- 135 Compareti, “Evidence of Mutual Exchange between Byzantine and Sogdian Art.” On the significance of “royal” feasting scenes in aristocratic houses in the context of Sogdian painting, see B. Marshak, *Legends, Tales, and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2002), 20–22.

FOREIGN VESTURE AND NOMADIC IDENTITY ON THE BLACK SEA LITTORAL IN THE EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Costume from the Chungul Kurgan

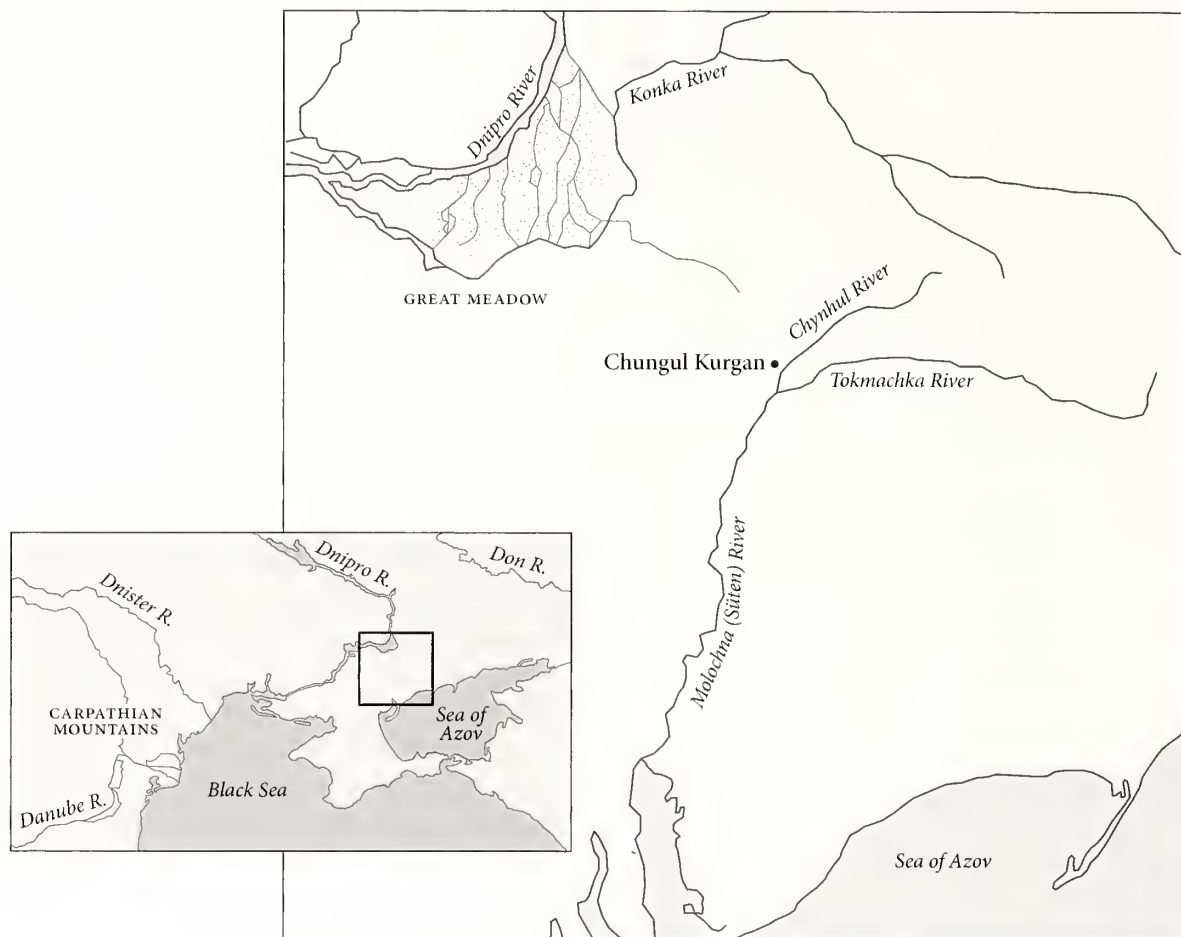
Abstract

The medieval Kıpçak burial at the Chungul Kurgan in the southern Ukrainian steppe presents a seemingly paradoxical situation. On the one hand, the burial—here dated to the opening decades of the thirteenth century—is inserted into a previously extant tumulus of Bronze Age date, and the evidence of funerary ritual points towards the continuation of shamanist practices. On the other hand, the grave goods are largely composed of luxury objects associated with elite patronage among the sedentary societies of Western Europe, Rus', and the Mediterranean zone. This juxtaposition is carried through in the partially preserved costumes excavated from the burial. These present features that recall elements of official court dress in Byzantium and in the neighboring Christian and Islamic polities. While several of the garments take the essentially Turkic form of the caftan, they incorporate in their applied decoration elements not normally associated with this particular garment.

Close examination of the textiles from the Chungul Kurgan has revealed that they almost certainly represent the reuse of imported silks, gold-woven bands, and gold embroideries that came into the possession of the nomadic Kıpçaks as gifts, trade items, or spoils of their raids on their sedentary neighbors. These include a panel of figural embroidery likely cut from a liturgical textile. Another group of embroideries and appliqués once formed a *loros*, the ceremonial scarf of Byzantine emperors, which was widely imitated in the dress and portraiture of other rulers in the region. A range of possible degrees of intentionality can govern the use of textile *spolia*—from strictly utilitarian reuse to the deliberately imitative, or victorious, appropriation of the insignia of another culture. The authors conclude that the way in which the textile elements were redeployed on the preserved garments represents at least a partial understanding of their meaning within their original contexts. Their reuse for the decoration of riding caftans incorporates the symbolic language of power and prestige that these insignia conveyed among the neighboring courtly cultures while preserving a distinctive, nomadic sartorial identity.

Introduction: The Chungul Kurgan

IN THE SUMMER OF 1981, an archaeological team headed by Vitaliy Otroshchenko from the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the (then) Ukrainian S.S.R., based in Kyiv, opened a burial mound in the southern Ukrainian steppe. The mound was located near the village of Zamozhne, a few kilometers from the town of Tokmak in the Zaporiz'ka oblast.¹ The site lies to the south of the great bend in the Dnipro (Dnieper) River, on its left bank. This part of the steppe is drained by the Molochna river system, which flows southward into the



1

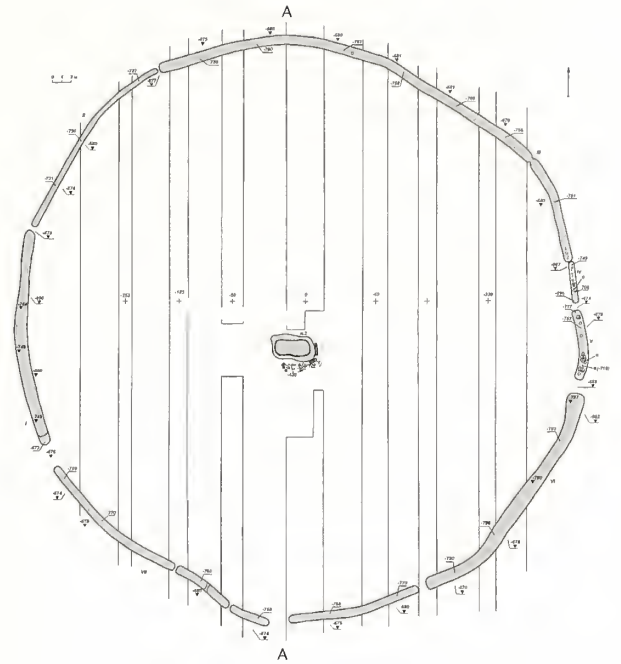
1
Map of the Black Sea region, with enlarged detail showing Dnipro and Azov watersheds.

Sea of Azov (Fig. 1). The expedition of 1981 targeted a group of four mounds on a plateau above the right bank of the Chynhul River, a few hundred meters upstream from its confluence with the Molochna. This group of kurgans was slated for excavation and removal in a salvage archaeology project in order to make way for a planned program of large-scale agricultural irrigation.² Kurgan 5, the largest of the group, was dubbed the “Chynhul Kurgan” (or “Chingul Kurgan” in Russian) by the excavators. Early nineteenth-century Russian maps of the region, however, label the river as “Chungul,” more faithfully preserving its probable Turkic name, “Çöngül.”³ The name has the meaning of “marshy ground” or “quagmire” in Ottoman Turkish, probably in reference to the wetlands abutting its confluence with the Tokmak River to form the Molochna.⁴ The name also reflects the fact that the area lay within Turkic nomadic territory well into the modern era. Reverting to the earlier name, then, we will henceforth refer to the mound as the Chungul Kurgan.

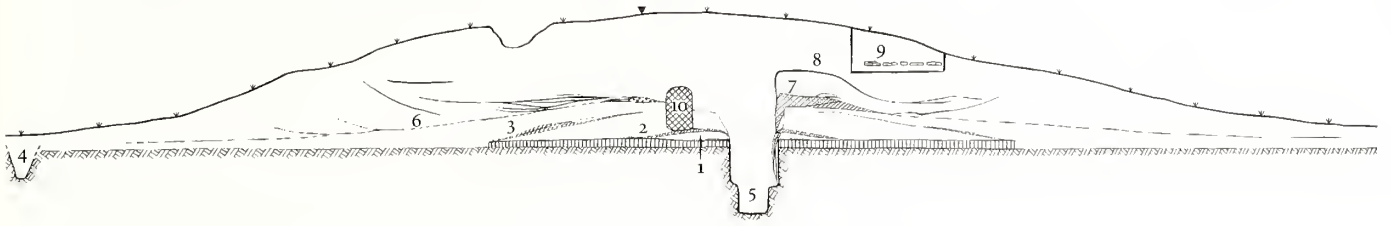
Prior to its excavation, the Chungul Kurgan still maintained its native steppe flora, having never been ploughed for cultivation. The mound stood some 5.8 meters above the modern ground level and extended to a maximum diameter of 68 meters.⁵ By the end of the 1981 excavation season, the entire volume of earth from the kurgan had been removed and the field leveled.⁶ In the process of excavation, the archaeologists uncovered nine prehistoric burials, with dates spanning the Eneolithic period to the Late Bronze Age.⁷ Such reuse of extant grave sites over the *longue durée* seems to have been relatively common in the ancient history of the



2



3A



3B

2

Chungul Kurgan trench, 1981.
Photograph Y. Rassamakin

3A

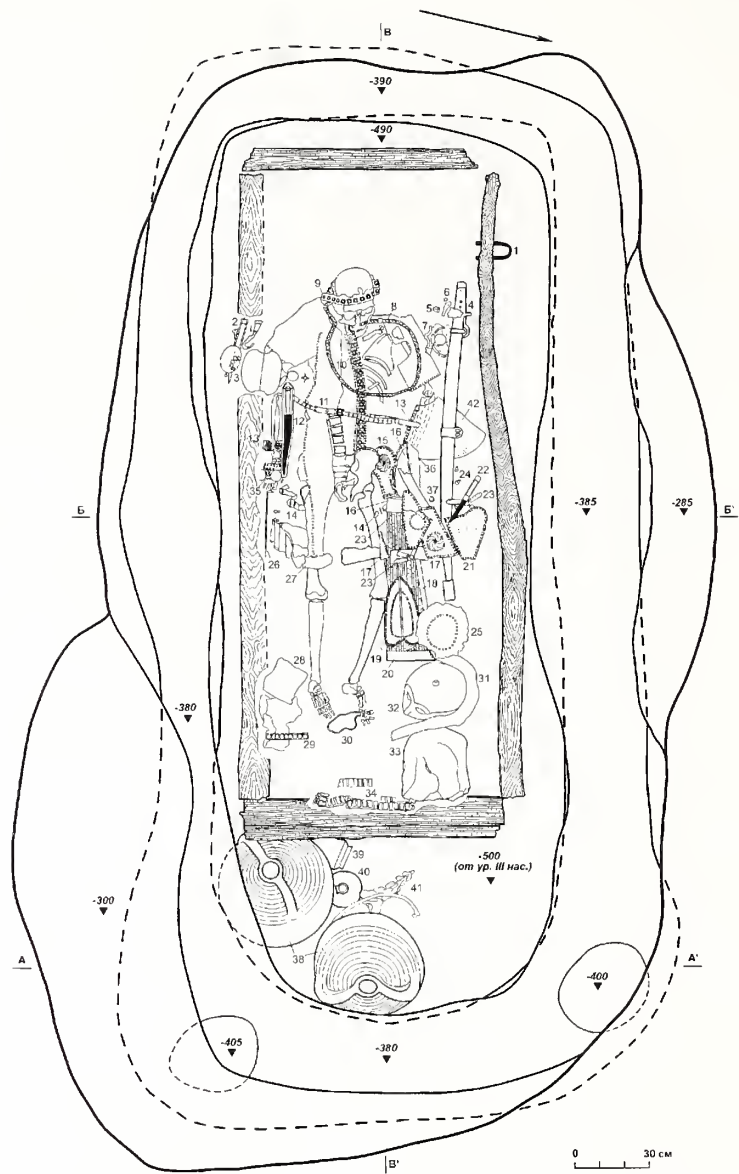
Plan of Chungul Kurgan with
medieval burial shaded at center.
Drawing Y. Rassamakin

3B

Section (A-A) of Chungul Kurgan
showing prehistoric mound profiles
(1–3), medieval perimeter ditch (4),
burial pit (5), profile of first phase
of medieval mound (6), fill layer
covering horse burials (7), first ritual
platform (8), stone foundations of
ritual structures (9), and modern
robber's tunnel (10). Drawing Y.
Rassamakin

steppe. Kurgans, being prominent features in an otherwise open landscape, often attracted multiple subsequent burials over centuries or even millennia.⁸ A completely unexpected discovery, however, was the medieval burial found sunk into the earth near the center of the mound, disturbing three of the earlier burials (Fig. 3A). The contour of the last Bronze Age phase of the mound was clearly visible in the excavation thanks to a layer of compacted vegetation; it measured approximately 1.5 meters high with a diameter approximately 55 to 56 meters. The cross section makes clear that the medieval burial used the earlier kurgan as a platform for a massively enlarged mound, nearly quadrupling its height (Figs. 2, 3A and 3B).

The excavation also clarified that the medieval burial was carried out in stages over a period of months or even years, likely connected to various funeral rituals.⁹ The first stage was the digging of a surrounding ditch beyond the perimeter of the Bronze Age mound, marking the territory of the burial as a Turkic sacral space (*qorug*). The tumulus was enlarged by building up layers of carefully laid blocks of cut sod in five ramparts around the sides of the mound, leaving five ramp-like passages for access to the center of the kurgan. The burial pit itself was inserted into the older mound and extended into the native earth below it. The pit had a stepped profile, with an upper part measuring 2.1 meters wide by 4.35 meters long by 3.8 meters deep, while the lower part, which contained the wooden coffin, extended another



4

4
Plan of burial pit showing deceased
and grave goods. Drawing Y.
Rassamakin and T. Y. Hoshko

1.25 meters deep. Examination of the skeleton by a paleopathologist indicated that the deceased was a tall and muscular male of about 55–60 years of age.¹⁰ Based on the arrangement of the burial goods in the wooden coffin, the body must have been placed in the coffin before being lowered into the pit. The grave goods were packed tight around the body, including a suite of arms and armor, multiple sets of clothing, two silver cups, and ornaments in gold and silver (Fig. 4). After the covering of the coffin, ritual offerings of mutton were added to the pit, as well as ceramic vessels: amphorae for wine or possibly kumiss (fermented mare's milk), and a bottle and albarello most likely containing aromatic or pharmacological substances.

The subsequent covering of the pit at its intermediate level and again at its top would have been followed by a ritual feast, on which occasion five horses were sacrificed. Their fully caparisoned remains were laid out alongside the grave pit. Shattered fragments of amphorae at this level testify to the ritual drinking. The entire

area of the burial was subsequently covered with a half-meter-thick layer of soil and clay to form a platform about 6 meters square. Here a small, light structure was erected. The horse skull found here in the excavations suggests a “scarecrow” consisting of a diagonally planted pole with a horse’s head at its upper end, draped in the skin of a horse. Such a temporary construction atop a burial is attested in historical and ethnographic sources.¹¹ At this time, the filling of the access paths would have begun. The excavation of one of these filled passages — the one leading to the eastern opening — uncovered a human skeleton, possibly an indication of a sacrifice sealing this phase of the ritual. The horse skull found in the ditch at the eastern opening of the passage could have belonged to a second “scarecrow.” After an indefinite period in the open, this phase would have been covered with another layer of earth that filled the entire interior area defined by the sod ramparts, about 30 meters in diameter. One or two structures with stone foundations were erected at this level, which also revealed the remains of a fire pit connected to the commemorative rituals. At the conclusion of these ceremonies, the fire was extinguished. Afterwards, the structures on the upper platform appear to have been intentionally dismantled, and the platform was covered by almost two meters of earth. The tumulus was topped off to form a truncated cone some 60 meters in diameter by 6–7 meters high.

The archaeological evidence for the funerary rituals is clearly of major interest, and will serve to help refine the interpretation of the burial as a whole. Here, however, our focus will be on the dress of the deceased. Despite its uneven state of preservation, the surviving fragments of costume buried with the medieval “prince”¹² suggest ways of understanding his nomadic culture both in terms of its native elements and in terms of cross-cultural interaction.¹³ Just as the archaeology of the mound presents a dramatic picture of nomadic religious ritual on the edge of the Orthodox Christian and Islamic worlds, so the textiles from the Chungul Kurgan bring to light a particular set of negotiations between the sartorial heritage of the steppe and the iconography of rulership among the nomads’ sedentary neighbors.

The Țipčak Nomads

The datable artifacts from the excavation range from the mid-twelfth century or even earlier to just after the turn of the thirteenth century.¹⁴ Based on the *terminus post quem* provided by the grave goods, the nature of the burial rites, and the geographic location of the burial, the deceased can be linked with confidence to the Țipčak nomads. The Țipčaks (also spelled Țipčags), known in the Slavic languages as *Polovtsy* and in Latin and Greek as *Cumani* / Κομάνοι were a confederation of Turkic nomads. Their origins are obscure, but they possibly emerged from a sub-confederation of the Kimäk (Kimek) tribal union in Siberia.¹⁵ By the later

part of the eleventh century, they had made their appearance in Western histories as a menace to the Pečeneg tribes of the northern Black Sea steppe. At the battle of Levounion in Thrace in 1091, the combined forces of the Byzantines under Alexios I Komnenos and a mercenary army of Kıpçak warriors effectively destroyed the military capacity of the Pečenegs.¹⁶ The Kıpçaks subsequently dominated the steppe zone of present-day southern Russia, Ukraine, and Romania until their confederation was, in its turn, crushed by the invading Mongols in 1237–38.¹⁷ They appear frequently in the chronicles of the cities of Kyivan Rus' as raiders who loot towns, monasteries, and churches.¹⁸ Under the year 1147, the Hypatian Chronicle describes the pillaging of the Church of the Holy Ascension at Putivl' by the Kıpçak allies of Sviatoslav Ol'govich, who took silver vessels, altar cloths, and gold-embroidered liturgical vestments.¹⁹

Despite their reputation as marauders, the Kıpçaks were widely recruited by their sedentary neighbors as mercenaries and palace guards. Their leaders intermarried with the ruling houses of the kingdoms bordering Kıpçak nomadic territory. Marital ties with the Riurikids of Kyivan Rus' were widespread, often as a seal to truce arrangements. Among examples of such alliances, the son of Ihor Sviatoslavych, Volodymyr, married a daughter of the Kıpçak leader Končak, and Yurii Dolgorukii, son of Volodymyr Monomakh, took as wife the daughter of the head of the Aepa/Ay-oba clan.²⁰ Mstyslav Mstyslavych of Halych was son-in-law of the Kıpçak leader Kotian, who would later lead a remnant of the Kıpçaks into exile in Hungary.²¹ Marriage alliances existed not only with the Orthodox Christian ruling families of Kyivan Rus', Georgia,²² and Bulgaria,²³ but also with the Muslim Turkic Khwarāzmshāhs.²⁴ The Georgian state was thus available as a refuge to Kıpçak tribes fleeing the steppe campaigns of Volodymyr Monomakh in the early years of the twelfth century.²⁵ Only a few decades later, the alliance with the Rus' princes had been restored to sufficient strength that the Rus' refused to allow the Mongol vanguard to impose suzerainty on the Kıpçaks. This refusal to comply with the *divide et impera* tactics of the Mongols led to the disastrous confrontation at Kalka in 1223, where the allied Rus' and Kıpçak forces were crushed by the Mongol army.²⁶ So despite their identification as barbarous pagan outsiders in most historical texts of the period, the Kıpçaks could, when needed, draw on their status as elite members of a number of ruling dynasties. The insider/outsider identity of the Kıpçaks will prove important in attempting to read the intention behind the medieval burial complex of the Chungul Kurgan and the selection of its contents.

Several aspects of the interment are familiar from excavation of other Kıpçak burials: the presence of horses and their equipment, the binding of the feet, the inclusion of a straightened metal torque (known as a *grivna/hryvnia*, from the medieval unit of exchange, in current Russian and Ukrainian archaeological pub-

lications), and the enclosure of the body and armor in a wooden coffin. Horses and horse equipment seem to be a recurring feature of Kıpçak graves.²⁷ The thirteenth-century Cistercian chronicler Aubry of Trois-Fontaines reports the burial of a Kıpçak leader in a tumulus outside the walls of Constantinople, accompanied into the afterlife by eight human warriors and no fewer than twenty-six horses.²⁸ Even allowing for substantial exaggeration in Aubry's account, no corresponding tumulus has yet come to light in modern excavations at Istanbul. Another Kıpçak grave from the Molochna river system of southern Ukraine, excavated in 1985, was accompanied by the deposition of a wooden cart as well as a saddle, stirrups, and bridle hardware.²⁹ The binding of the feet is attested in a few other Turkic burial contexts, including an unpublished Kıpçak burial; at the Chungul Kurgan, the feet were bound with a gold chain.³⁰ The spiral-twisted gold *grivna*, or torque, found in the right hand of the deceased, is paralleled in other Kıpçak burial contexts in both silver and iron, although no other gold example is known from the steppe region.³¹ Despite the very rich inventory of the Chungul burial, it lacks the kinds of utilitarian vessels, particularly cooking vessels of bronze, that are typical of other excavated Kıpçak graves.³² Although one must allow for the fact that most other high-status graves have been robbed, these aspects of the grave inventory are, at present, unique, and establish the elite status of the deceased.

The occupation history of this area of the Pontic steppe leaves little doubt that the burial should be associated with the Kıpçak nomads. The spectacular finds from the Chungul Kurgan also highlight the range of contacts of the Kıpçaks in general and of the deceased in particular. The burial contained metalwork of Western European origin, textiles and enameled metalwork from Byzantium, arms and armor from Rus', ceramics from Syria, Anatolia, and Tauric Chersonesos, as well as works likely to have been made in the local Turkic milieu. As noted above, the objects with datable comparative material indicate that the burial itself can be no earlier than the beginning of the thirteenth century, while the consolidation of Mongol control in the region after 1237 makes the construction of such an impressive tomb by the conquered Kıpçaks intrinsically unlikely. The plausible window for the burial is thus roughly a quarter century, beginning circa 1210 and ending in 1238, the date of Batu Khan's final conquest of the Pontic steppe (*Dasht-i Kıpçak*).³³

Textiles from the Chungul Kurgan

Among the burial goods, the textiles are of prime importance, not only for their richness but also because of their rarity for this period. We have the partial remains of at least four ensembles.³⁴ One set of robes, consisting of a silk caftan and a light inner tunic, was worn by the deceased in his burial (Figs. 5A, B). Another group of at least two separate caftans, possibly also including lighter inner tunics, was found



5A



5B



6



7

5A

Burial caftan in situ, detail showing embroidery on torso. Photograph V. I. Klochko

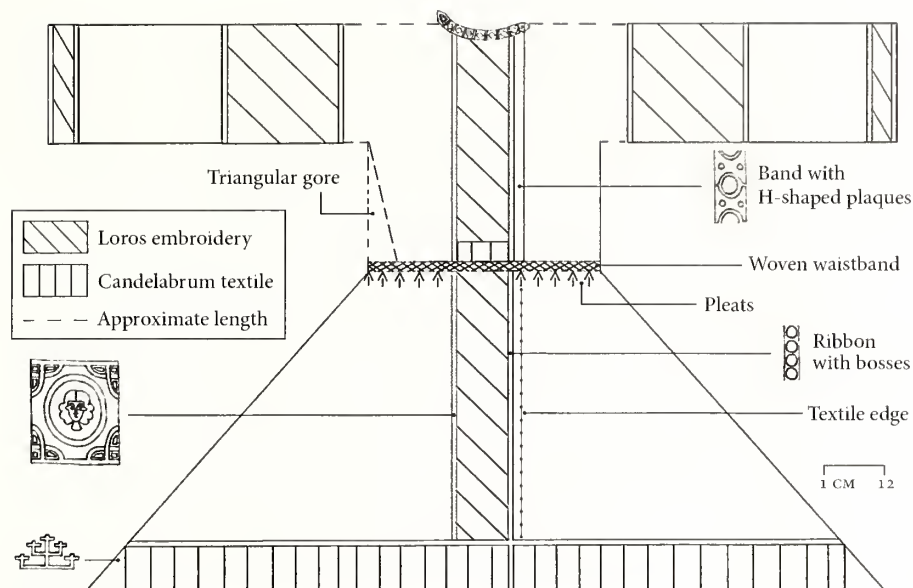
5B

Burial caftan in situ, detail showing lower part of caftan on body. Photograph V. I. Klochko

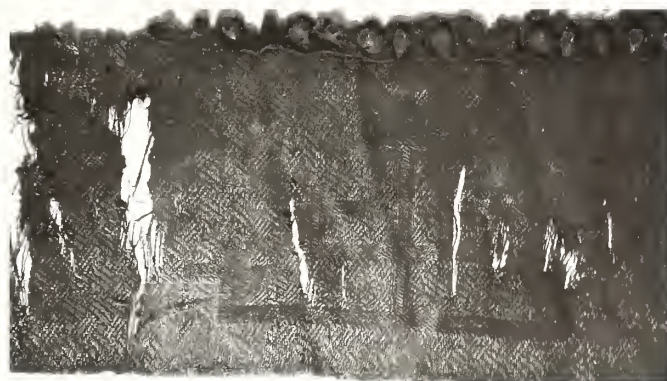
folded up in a bundle under the armor at his side (Fig. 6). Still another set of garments was folded near the warrior's feet (Fig. 7). Of the last, we have only the silver-gilt appliqué that were once sewn onto the collar and waist of the light under-tunic, and remains of the heavy silk-and-gold fabric ribbon that once trimmed the hem of a caftan.

The Burial Caftan

The first impression of the costumes from the Chungul Kurgan is one of astonishing luxury. All the preserved textiles from the garments are of silk, lavishly trimmed with gold embroidery, pearls, gilt appliqué, and applied bands woven of silk and gold. The caftan buried on the body was made from heavy silk compound twill (i.e.,



8



9

6

Caftan fragments from garment bundle under armor in situ. Photograph V. I. Klochko

7

Remains of garments folded at feet. Photograph V. I. Klochko

8

Reconstruction of burial caftan. Drawing M. G. Stepan and C. Weller

9

"Candelabrum" ribbon. Photograph D. V. Klochko

samite), of which relatively little survived the ravages of seven centuries of burial in a steppe climate. As the garment is in such fragmentary condition, it may be best understood with the help of a diagram (Fig. 8). It was trimmed at the waist and at the circumference of the hem with elaborate woven bands of gold and silk. The band at the waist was ornamented with a diagonal basket-weave pattern, while that at the hem bears a pattern of repeating candelabra or stylized trees of life against a basket-weave background of gold thread (Fig. 9). A short section of the latter ribbon is also set into the waistband of the caftan at its center.³⁵ Further pieces of the same metallic ribbon made up a triangular gore under the proper right arm, although this did not survive the process of excavation. Another metallic ribbon 4 centimeters wide, which did not survive excavation, ran down the spine of the caftan from the collar to the waist. Similar gold-and-silk bands are familiar from the trimmings of both medieval liturgical vestments and robes of state preserved in Western Europe. Sometimes mistakenly classed as tablet-weaving, these are based on a compound twill structure with supplementary metallic wefts. Numerous European examples of the twelfth century have technical as well as stylistic characteristics that suggest they share a common origin with the Chungul fragments.³⁶



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The front of the burial caftan and its sleeves are decorated with bands of figural embroidery. A band of indigo-dyed silk samite 12 centimeters wide runs from the collar to the waist of the caftan and serves as the ground for the embroidered decoration of silk, gold, and pearls. This band was interrupted at the waist by an inset panel of metallic ribbon in the “candelabra” pattern mentioned above, as well as by the waistband of basket-weave-patterned metallic twill. The embroideries resumed below the waist and continued as far as the hem of the skirt. Further panels of embroidery, measuring 24 by 24 centimeters, ornamented the sleeves near the shoulders, and narrower bands of 6 by 24 centimeters width decorated the cuffs. The embroidered decoration of all these pieces consists of roundels, about 4 centimeters in diameter, with human faces depicted in the center (Fig. 10). The silk faces are surrounded by a background of couched gold thread, in turn surrounded by elaborate braids of twisted gold thread with pearl stringing. The braids and pearls are shaped into interlaced strapwork knots between the roundels, which appear in a band down the front of the garment and in other bands on the sleeves and at the cuffs. In the interstices of these knots are raised, silver-gilt plaques in two shapes: squares measuring 2 millimeters across and half-arch forms measuring 2 by 6 millimeters. The latter shape had to be manufactured in complementary pairs, left-facing and right-facing, a fact which strongly suggests that they were made expressly for employment in this embroidered decor. Each plaque is in turn surrounded by pearl stringing. The estimated total count of pearls on the garment is over 35,000 pearls of just over a millimeter diameter each (Fig. 11).³⁷

The form of the embroidered decoration on the burial caftan agrees well with representations (for such are all we have recourse to) of the Byzantine *loros*, the jeweled scarf that was among the most prominent insignia of the imperial ward-



13

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"Loros" embroidery. Photograph
D. V. Klochko

11

Detail of "loros" embroidery showing
gold wire knot with pearl stringing
and silver-gilt plaques. Photograph
D. V. Klochko

12

The Emperor Alexander (r. 912–13).
Mosaic. Hagia Sophia, Istanbul.
Photograph Dumbarton Oaks,
Photographic and Fieldwork Archive

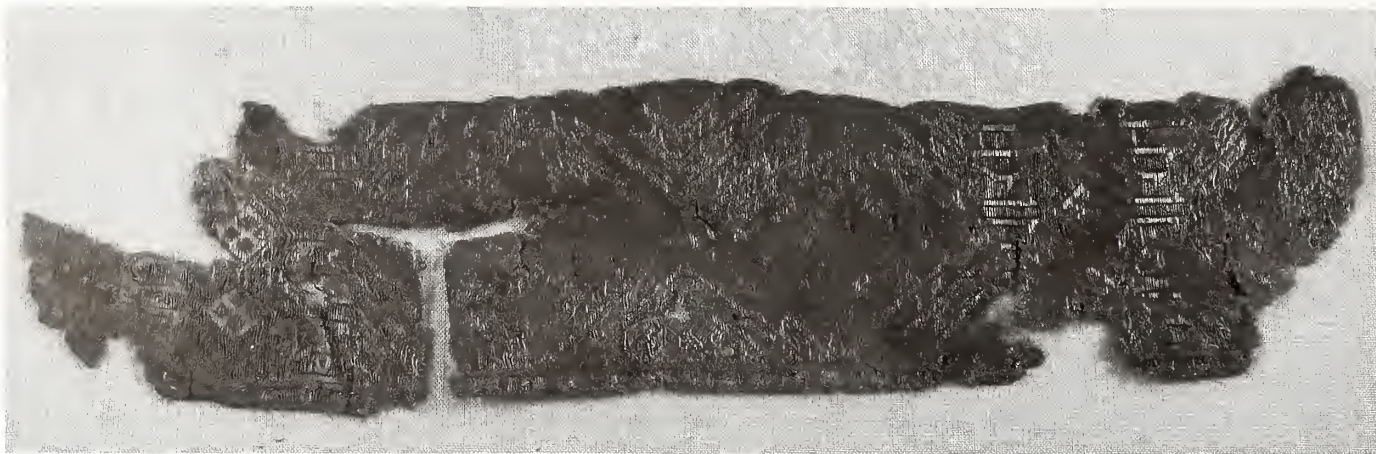
13

Belt buckles from the Chungul
Kurgan. Photographs D. V. Klochko

robe (Fig. 12). Like later forms of the *loros*, the embroidered band is permanently attached to the underlying garment, and includes discrete patches at the shoulders and cuffs coordinated to the decoration of the vertical element.³⁸ It also maintains the typical division of the design into square compartments. On the other hand, no part of the excavated garment seems to correspond to the free-hanging portion that should pass over the left arm from behind the back. Furthermore, we have no other depiction of an imperial *loros* with figural embroidery.³⁹ The closest one may come to such a *loros* with embroidered faces in surviving Byzantine iconography is the depiction of Saint Kyriakē (literally, "Saint Sunday") in imperial dress, wearing a *loros* decorated with personifications of the other days of the week.⁴⁰ The correspondence to Byzantine imperial dress, then, is close, but not absolute.

Belts

The caftan with its *loros*-like decoration was worn over a lighter, long-sleeved garment of uncertain cut, presumably a tunic. Its applied ornament of silver-gilt plaques survives at the collar and cuffs, while the underlying silk fabric is almost entirely lost. The inner and outer garments were secured with belts bearing parcel-gilt silver buckles (Fig. 13). The inner tunic was secured with the more elaborate of the two belts, its buckle plate decorated with a siren cast in high relief. The work strongly recalls elements of the yet more elaborate silver buckle from the Dune Treasure found in Gotland, Sweden, probably dating to the first decades of the thirteenth century.⁴¹ The buckle securing the outer caftan is more difficult to date. Similar belt buckles appear through much of the thirteenth century both in the archaeological record and in sculptural representations such as tomb effigies.⁴² Among the handful of surviving silver buckles of early thirteenth-century date is the belt buckle of Saint Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, still preserved as a relic together with its woven belt of silk and gold.⁴³ Elizabeth's ownership of the belt is attested as early as the fifteenth century, so it is quite likely that it indeed belonged to her before her death in 1231.⁴⁴ A third buckle, bearing traces of enamel, was found on a belt with an attached knife near the right shoulder of the deceased, unconnected to the surviving garments. It can be compared to a buckle of Limoges production in Vienna, dating to the end of the twelfth century.⁴⁵ Together, the collection of three



14

14

Band with pseudo-Kufic inscription
from armor. Photograph Y.
Rassamakin

buckles tends to confirm the supposed date of burial in the early part of the thirteenth century. The simple, outer buckle has provided the thorniest issues in terms of its dating. The specialized monograph on Western medieval belt buckles by Ilse Fingerlin in fact re-dates the similar Saint Elizabeth belt to the mid-thirteenth century on the basis of the earliest depictions of buckles of this type in sculpture, which date to circa 1240.⁴⁶ Not only should logic dictate that the manufacture of actual objects precede their representation in other media, but one may in fact posit a delay of about two decades between the rise of a new fashion and its first depiction in art.⁴⁷ Furthermore, as a rule, medieval fashions originate at the elite level in precious material and are subsequently imitated in media of lesser value, rather than the other way around.⁴⁸ The fact that all three buckles are of heavy silver, and that one of the three is linked by its form to a relic of a sainted royal, again confirms the elite rank of the burial and argues for a date early in the thirteenth century.

Shield and Bowcase

Adjacent to the body were fragments of straps for the wearing of the round shield and the bowcase, these decorated with gold and silk woven bands bearing pseudo-Kufic inscriptions (Fig. 14). These inscribed bands of course recall the use of *ṭirāz* textile bands adorned with the name of an Islamic ruler or, later, pious inscriptions in Arabic that were given as gifts by various Muslim courts. The patterns were widely imitated in textiles and costume of the Mediterranean world, including Byzantium, in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries.⁴⁹ The ribbons with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions are technically similar to the silk-and-gold bands trimming the garments,⁵⁰ and they may share a common regional origin, likely in the central or eastern Mediterranean.

Folded Caftans

A bundle consisting of at least two further silk caftans was found folded up beneath elements of the armor. Gold and pearl embroidery was also a feature of these garments. Unfortunately, in the earliest phases of conservation carried out in the early 1980s, the layers of this textile bundle were separated one from another without the direct supervision of the excavator. In the process, much evidence for the original relationships among the various parts was lost.⁵¹ One of the larger fragments bears figural embroidery, including the lower half of the figure of an archangel with pearl-



15

15
Archangel and donor embroideries
from caftan fragment under armor.
Photograph D. V. Klochko



16

16
G. G. Gagarin drawing of
destroyed fresco of Manuel I Megas
Komnenos from the Church of
Hagia Sophia at Trebizond. After
*Sobranie vizantiiskikh, gruzinskikh
i drevnerusskikh ornamentov i
pamiatnikov arkhitektury / Recueil
d'ornements et d'architecture
byzantines, géorgiennes et russes* (St.
Petersburg, 1897–1903), Pl. 25

ornamented wings (Fig. 15), possibly forming part of the back of the caftan to which it was attached. Embroidery of sacred figures on liturgical veils and priestly vestments is attested in Byzantium from the twelfth century.⁵² We also have at least one piece of evidence for the use of sacred images on Byzantine court costume.⁵³ A fresco of the emperor of the Byzantine principality of Trebizond, Manuel I Megas Komnenos (r. 1238–63), showed him wearing a garment with a large medallion image of Saint Eugenios on the chest. Now lost, the fresco was recorded in descriptions and in a drawing of the nineteenth century (Fig. 16).⁵⁴ So, just as the caftan on the body of the deceased can be paralleled with the Byzantine *loros*, the caftan with the large archangel can also be connected with Byzantine traditions of court dress. Both caftans, moreover, are constructed of silk samite, the complex, compound weave widely found among documented Byzantine textiles exported to the West in the Middle Ages.⁵⁵ At first glance, then, one might take the caftans for imports or direct imitations of Byzantine court dress of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.

Foreign Parallels and Native Adaptation

The first impression of the deceased from the Chungul Kurgan is that he was buried with the sartorial trappings of power traditional among the great surrounding cultures: Byzantium and its Slavic and Caucasian satellites, the polities of the Islamic world, and the Latin West. Among the elements of his dress and accoutrements are echoes of the *ḫirāz* of Islamic courts, the belts that were significant emblems of rank in the medieval West as well as in the Islamic world, and figural



17

17
Burial caftan, detail showing pleating
at waist of skirt. Photograph D. V.
Klochko

embroidery associated with Byzantine liturgical and court dress. On the one hand, the pattern of the embroideries on the burial caftan recalls the *loros* worn as part of the costume of the Byzantine emperors; on the other hand, we have the constituent elements of the traditional Islamic *khila*, or robes of honor.⁵⁶ With a closer look, however, one sees more clearly the way these various elements are adapted and reshaped to nomadic usage.

Most saliently, there is the caftan form itself, with full pleated skirts reaching to the knees. Both of the reconstructable fragments from the burial are gathered at the waist into hundreds of tiny pleats that would have made for a very roomy skirt well adapted to straddling a saddle on horseback (Fig. 17). Although Byzantium adapted a form of the caftan under the Hellenized name of *kabbadion*, it was a long, close-fitting garment reaching to mid-calf. It appears as early as the later twelfth century in the frescoes of the church of the Holy Anargyroi at Kastoria, in Greece. There the donor portrait of John, son of Theodore Lemniotes, painted circa 1180, shows him clad in a caftan-like garment with elbow-length sleeves, fastening in the middle of the front and secured with a buckled belt. It is worn over a tight-fitting, long-sleeved garment.⁵⁷ The silver repoussé frame of an icon in the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow, from around the turn of the fourteenth century, shows the donor Constantine Akropolites clad in such a garment, in this case with its hem reaching to the ankles. The buttoning of the caftan up the front opening is clearly shown as a series of prominent bosses on the gilded silver image, while the pleats at the waist are represented by incised lines (Fig. 18).⁵⁸ Such garments clearly represent borrowings from Turkic, Persian, and Central Asian fashions in Byzantine dress, which was traditionally based on various sorts of tunics (i.e., garments pulled on over the head) and mantles.⁵⁹ The very name *kabbadion* (from the Persian *qabā*) betrays its foreign origin, which was also acknowledged by Byzantine authors on court pro-



18

Constantine Akropolites, detail from icon frame, ca. 1300. Silver. State Tret'iakov Gallery, Moscow, inv. no. 22722, OS 118. After A. V. Bank, *Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums* (Leningrad: Aurora, 1977), fig. 245

to col.⁶⁰ It likely entered Byzantine fashion through the medium of nomadic mercenaries and palace guards, eventually being adopted by the Greek population.⁶¹ In the context of Islamic robes of honor, the *qabā*, or caftan, was distinctly the garment of military officials. Civilians, even of the highest rank, wore the *ḡamiṣ*, or tunic, rather than the caftan.⁶²

Furthermore, both partially preserved caftans from the Chungul Kurgan are lined with fur of the marten (*Martes* species). The Kıpçaks of the steppe were a link in the trade networks for furs from the tribal peoples of what is now northern Russia and western Siberia to the Mediterranean and Western Europe.⁶³ Luxury fur linings — marten generally and especially its most prized variety, sable — were themselves signs of rank. The Mamluk rulers of Syria and Egypt, themselves former Kıpçak slaves captured in this very region and sold into servitude in the Mediterranean, continued to wear — and be depicted wearing — fur-lined caftans in their new, Middle Eastern territories.⁶⁴

In this respect they followed the widespread iconography of Turkic rulers and military leaders of this era, who are universally depicted in caftans regardless of the location in which they held rank or power. By contrast, civil officials are depicted wearing tunics. This sartorial coding of representations of civil versus military status and authority is present throughout the visual record of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries in the central Islamic lands. The distinction is illustrated in manuscript copies of al-Hariri's *Maqamat* of the first part of the thirteenth century, for example in the two closely related copies, now in Istanbul and St. Petersburg, where the amir or military personage is inevitably shown wearing a tailored coat or caftan, while the judge — being a civil official — wears a tunic.⁶⁵ Likewise, the double-page painting showing a mosque scene in a *Maqamat* copy of 1237 juxtaposes a preacher in a tunic on the right with an amir wearing a caftan on the left.⁶⁶ The court scenes represented in a copy of the *Kitāb al-Diryāq*, probably painted in the Jazira, make the same distinction, while the famous representations of Badr al-Din Lu'lu', the Kurdish *atabeg* of Mosul in the early thirteenth century, show him in a caftan.⁶⁷ The ubiquitous depictions of rulers and courtiers in tailored coats are a feature of Kashan-produced ceramics.⁶⁸ This visual record shows coats closing variously to the left, to the right, and at the center, in contrast to the significance accorded to the direction of the closure in the accounts of Western travelers. John of Plano Carpini refers to the habit among the nomadic Türks of wearing caftans cut with the opening on the left, and William of Rubruck notes that the opening to the left or to the right differentiates "Tartars" (i.e., Mongols) from the Türks (i.e., Kıpçaks).⁶⁹ Regardless of these details, it is clear that, rather than being imitations of the robes of state of sedentary empires, the caftans from the Chungul Kurgan burial reflect a nomadic and Turkic military identity through their cut and materials.⁷⁰

While the caftan was a form of garment shared by the Kıpçaks and the Byzantines by the period of the Chungul Kurgan burial, the decoration of the two caftans described above complicates the correspondence. The Byzantine *loros*, which seems to have inspired the decoration of the burial caftan, was an accessory not of any sort of caftan but of a tunic, that is, a garment pulled on over the head. Details of the construction of the garments that have emerged from recent scientific investigation shed further light on the question of native traditions versus foreign imitation. The analysis by our textile conservator in Kyiv, Maria Stepan, reveals that the partially preserved caftans were assembled out of a virtual patchwork of textiles of differing weaves and weights. Dye analysis performed in a forensic laboratory in Kyiv has indicated differing colorants among the textiles from various parts of the garments. The collar and placket of the burial caftan, both of which were faced with an almost continuous row of silver-gilt plaques, yielded the chemical signature for bromide from the fragments of purple silk supporting the appliqués. The presence of this ion may indicate that this silk was dyed with true, murex purple, a rare commodity at any period.⁷¹ In the construction of their robes of state, the Palermo workshops of the Normans and Hohenstaufens seem to have conserved textiles dyed with murex purple almost obsessively, confining their use to the most visible areas of the garment.⁷² Given that the purple fabric is, in this case, obscured by the silver ornaments, it is almost certain that these fragments were reused from an earlier garment or hanging.

Also among the surviving textiles are several fragments found lining the hem of a garment that was folded up near the feet of the deceased. Most of the garment was lost to decay, but narrow strips remain of a once-splendid textile with a woven pattern of elephants surrounded by a border of fantastical creatures within pearled roundels (Fig. 19). It appears to be a type of lampas⁷³ — a technique which developed in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁷⁴ The textile must therefore date somewhat later in the chronology of Byzantine silk weaving than the famous elephant silk from the tomb of Charlemagne, datable to the tenth or early eleventh century, which is of compound twill weave.⁷⁵ One can compare the spectacular brocaded silk lampas with griffins from the cathedral of Sens, a work surely to be attributed to a Byzantine court workshop around the turn of the twelfth century, or, closer to the design of the Chungul fragment, a poorly preserved silk with elephants, senmurvs, and winged horses from the grave of Archbishop Arnold of Trier (d. 1183). Despite the twelfth-century date of the grave in which it was found, the Trier textile probably dates to the eleventh century.⁷⁶ At the Chungul Kurgan, we are again likely looking at a case of a textile at least a century older than the burial it was found in, used as a reinforcing lining in a place where it would have been completely hidden.



19

19
Elephant-patterned silk from
lining of caftan at feet of deceased.
Photograph Y. Rassamakin



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20
Manuel I Komnenos and Maria of
Antioch, dated 1166. Vat. gr. 1176, fol.
11r. Photograph Biblioteca Apostolica
Vaticana

As has already been pointed out, the disposition and decorative scheme of the embroideries on the caftan worn by the deceased strongly recall aspects of the *loros*, the ceremonial scarf of the Byzantine emperors. No *loros* survives from Byzantium, but its evolution can be traced in pictorial sources. Its origins lie in the ornamental border of the consular *toga picta* of the late Roman empire. By the seventh century, it had become an independent ornament consisting of a scarf (the literal translation of *loros*) some 6 meters in length, wrapped around the body in imitation of the earlier wrapping of the toga.⁷⁷ Like the *toga picta*, the *loros* was worn over a tunic. It was draped over the shoulders in a Y-shape, with a long trailing end that was worn hanging over the wearer's left arm. By the middle of the tenth century, a simplified form of the *loros* was introduced, which, having an opening at the neck, could be pulled on over the tunic rather than painstakingly wrapped.⁷⁸ This latter form of the *loros* must have been rather longer in back than in the front (about 180–190 centimeters in back compared to 120–130 centimeters in front) to allow for the tail to be brought around and draped over the left forearm. Over the course of the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, the *loros* came to be not only coordinated with the decoration of the tunic worn with it, but actually attached to the underlying garment. Thus in its final form, it would have consisted of areas of embroidered appliques on the front, back, and shoulders of the garment, with only the portion reaching from the back over the left arm remaining as a free-hanging element (Fig. 20). Assuming that it was connected to the imperial garments somewhere near the small of the back, this free-hanging length of the *loros* can be estimated at 130 centimeters. Until the Palaiologan period (1261–1453), the characteristic decoration of the *loros* consisted of a grid or diaper pattern of squares, often with pearled out-

lines, with round or square gems in their centers.⁷⁹ Often the borders of the *loros* are shown supporting further pendant gems or pearls.

One very puzzling aspect of the embroidered medallions on the burial caftan is that the embroidered faces in the fifth row down from the collar are upside down, with the resumption of upright orientation in the following rows (Fig. 21). Another such reversal of direction can be detected in the fragmentary roundels cut off by the inset metallic ribbon at the waist. These changes in the orientation of the faces are difficult to explain away as an artist's error. If we consider the possibility, however, that the band of embroidery was reused from an earlier costume, there are potential explanations. If, as seems possible, the embroideries were once worn as an actual *loros*, there are several points at which the orientation of the decoration on the band would have to shift to appear consistently upright to the viewer. One notes, in particular, the draping of the *loros* over the left forearm, necessitating a brief shift in the orientation of decoration over the portion draped between the forearm and the chest. While we have not been able to reach any conclusion as to whom the embroidered portraits are meant to represent, they may be assumed to be sufficiently significant that the maintenance of an upright orientation would have been desirable. The reversal of direction of the embroidered faces strongly suggests an earlier and original use of the embroideries elsewhere on an actual *loros*. Furthermore the length of the embroidered band on the front of the caftan, at approximately 100 centimeters, could easily have come from the free-hanging portion of a *loros*, on which such reversals of orientation might be expected to occur.

It should be noted, in this connection, that the *loros* was widely adopted by the neighbors and successor states of Byzantium for the presentation of their rulers in art. That these images reflected the usage of actual costumes is attested by Theodore Metochites in the last decade of the thirteenth century: he reports being received by King Milutin of Serbia, who was dressed in garments studded with gold and gems in the imperial manner.⁸⁰ In fact, it has been demonstrated that the fourteenth-century *stola* of the Holy Roman Emperors, itself a remodeled piece of the Norman coronation regalia, was meant to be wrapped as a *loros*. When arranged this way, the seemingly haphazard orientation of the brocaded eagles on the *stola* is resolved, with all of the motifs appearing upright to the viewer.⁸¹ If the embroideries of the Chungul Kurgan burial caftan indeed came from a *loros*, it need not necessarily have originated in Constantinople.

On the caftan found folded up beneath the armor, the embroidered image of an archangel and a small donor figure at first suggested to the investigators a fragment of a larger composition occupying an entire side of the torso of the caftan.⁸² As with the embroidered medallions on the burial caftan, the embroidered faces do not align in the expected direction: the donor figure faces away from the arch-



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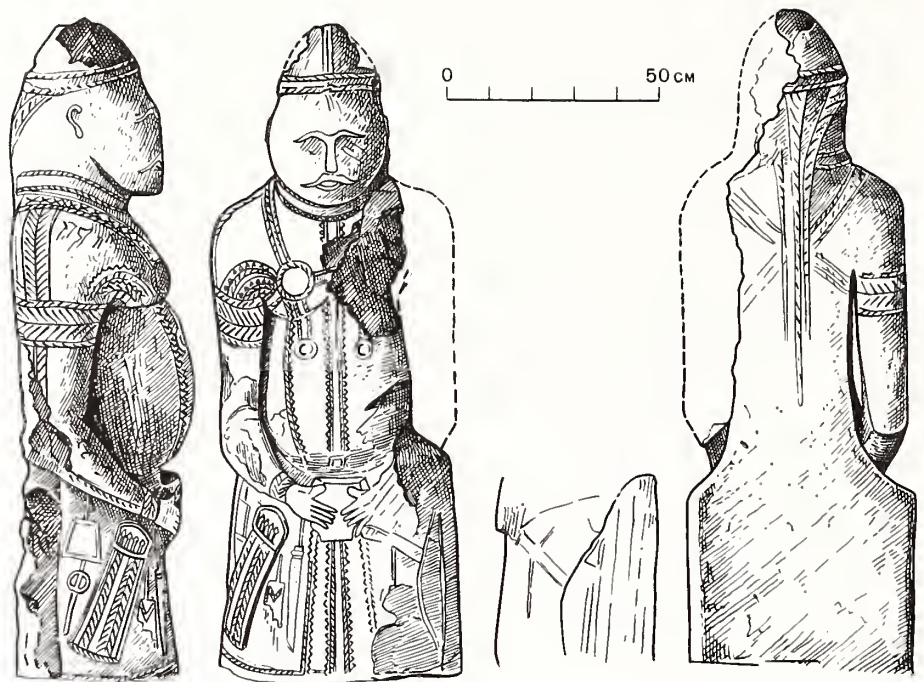
Detail of figure 10 showing inverted heads in embroidered "loros" band. Photograph D. V. Klochko

22

Detail of figure 15 showing cut through donor arm and inscription. Photograph D. V. Klochko

angel at whose feet he stands, contrary to iconographic norms. The accompanying inscription in Slavonic characters is too fragmentary to be readily deciphered.⁸³ The panel of embroidery is framed on both sides by narrow ribbons bearing a series of hemispherical, silver-gilt bosses. When this ribbon was lifted from the edge of the embroidery, it was discovered that the embroidery had been cut right across the hands of the donor figure as well as through a letter of the inscription (Fig. 22). Close examination revealed that the ornamental panel of vegetal ornament below the archangel's footstool was executed on a lighter-weight fabric than that supporting the embroidery of the figures. This textile was doubled-over to match the gauge of the much heavier silk underlying the archangel embroidery.⁸⁴ The joining of the two different weights of silk fabric — on the reverse by a carefully executed, turned-under seam — would have taken place at the time of the original execution of the embroidery. Based on the orientation of the donor figure, there must have been a further figure or figures in the center of the original embroidered panel, toward whom the donor's gaze was directed. Most likely, the composition took the form of a *deesis*, in which the image of Christ would have been flanked by one or more pairs of intercessors, such as the holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel.⁸⁵ The physical examination of the edge of the embroidery made clear, then, that these were not integral parts of a robe of state but rather reused fragments, probably from an ecclesiastical embroidery such as an altar cloth.

The silk and metallic ribbons used extensively to trim all the surviving Chun-gul caftans are technically and iconographically similar to examples known from the Mediterranean world, as has already been observed. Their disposition on the



23

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Kipčak statue, twelfth–thirteenth century. Stone. Kherson Regional Museum, Kherson. Drawing after Pletneva, *Polovetskie kamennye izvaianiia*, pl. 71, 12

caftans, however, mirrors the way decorative trimmings are indicated on Kipčak stone statues found in the Pontic steppe (*balbal* or *bolvan*; popularly known by their Russian name as *kamennye baby*).⁸⁶ Although these statues are generally very weathered and lack fine detail, in many instances one can discern patterned bands of cloth trimming the opening of the caftan along the center line of the chest, as well as the waist, sides, and spine (Fig. 23). We cannot be sure of the exact nature of these bands, but the finds of woven silk and gold bands elsewhere in the region may indicate that they were prized among the Kipčak elite.⁸⁷ Gold trimmings in similar positions also appear on the costumes of Georgian rulers in their official portraiture. In frescoes of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the members of the Bagrationi dynasty depicted themselves sometimes in the long Byzantine tunic and *loros*, sometimes in caftans trimmed at the openings and hems with gold-woven bands.⁸⁸ It is worth noting, however, that the two styles, while they appear side by side in Georgian fresco painting, are never blended in a single portrait: the *loros* and the caftan are never worn together. The caftan from the Chungul Kurgan is, therefore, exceptional. Furthermore, the opening of the caftan, which is perfectly centered whenever indicated on the stone figures, is in the case of the burial caftan offset several centimeters to the left in order to accommodate the reused *loros*.

A feature of the tailoring of at least two of the Chungul caftans is the narrow ribbon with silver-gilt bosses that was used along all the seams of the embroidery and woven bands. Consisting of a strip of samite 12 millimeters wide and hemmed on its underside, it was evidently prepared with its silver ornament prior to being sewn onto the caftans. In places, the ribbon preserves fragments of its original decoration of tiny pearls ringing the individual bosses. Examination of the seams covered by this ribbon reveals that the edges of the two pieces of fabric are generally butted rather than turned under, and the sewing itself is carried out with a darning stitch. The extensive use of the ornamental ribbon, for all its richness, actually conceals



24

24

Caftan under armor, detail showing attachment of pleated skirt to waist (obverse and reverse). Photograph Y. Rassamakin

hasty, even shoddy sewing. Perhaps the most astonishing discovery was the method of attachment of the skirt of the caftan with the embroidered archangel.⁸⁹ The skirt, as has been mentioned, was meticulously gathered into hundreds of pleats each about 3 millimeters wide. The upper part was then attached to the torso of the caftan by a single line of sewing through the selvedge of the woven gold and silk ribbon trimming the waist (Fig. 24). Although our first impression was that these costumes were adapted for life on horseback, the details of their construction present a very different picture. The wearer could hardly have mounted a horse, let alone ridden it, without the skirt ripping free of the body of the caftan. The likely conclusion, then, is that this garment, at least, was assembled for the express purpose of burial with the “prince.”

Toward Some Conclusions on Dress, Ritual, and Identity

Having progressed from an initial impression of the caftans from the Chungul Kurgan burial and some of their visual references to a close look at some of the details of their manufacture and construction, we can begin to engage in some informed speculation about how this clothing relates to the nomadic polity of the *Ķipčaks* and to its relationship with its sedentary neighbors. We know from Rus’ sources that precious textiles were on occasion deliberately cut and distributed as largesse in lieu of coinage. In the year 1115, on the occasion of the translation of the relics of Saints Boris and Gleb, Volodymyr Monomakh dispersed the crowd blocking the progress of the procession by ordering gold embroideries and brocade to be cut up and passed out to the people along with silver coins.⁹⁰ Both earlier and later Eurasian cultures made garments that were similarly composed of disparate elements that arrived either as gifts, trade goods, booty or largesse. One can compare the caftans from the well-known Caucasian site of Moschevaia Balka, which combine various Persian, Byzantine, Chinese, and Central Asian textiles of the early medieval period

(Fig. 25). In many of these cases, the textiles were of both high intrinsic value and high value as signifiers of elite status, as, for example, in the case of the famous *senmurv* caftan now in the Hermitage.⁹¹ A recently discovered Mongol-period burial in the north Caucasus, tentatively dated to the late thirteenth through fourteenth century, provides an important comparison.⁹² Here, the trousers reuse a gold and silk embroidery of the Ascension of Christ, as is evident from the fragments of inscription and the postures of the apostles and angels. No attention is paid, however, to their orientation. The composition has been chopped up and used crazy-quilt fashion without regard to whether the figures are vertical, sideways, or inverted. On a spectrum of reuse running from a pole of pure opportunism, innocent of ideological content, to the other extreme of fully conscious imitation or subversion, we can place the application of the embroidery on the Mongol trousers at the opportunistic end of the spectrum.⁹³ The embroidery is simply ornament; its iconography is ignored. While anomalies in their deployment tip us off to the fact of their reuse, the embroidery fragments on the Chungul Kurgan caftans are placed in a much more deliberate fashion. The donor figure and inscription may be ignored, but the large figure of the archangel, whose military status as commander of the heavenly hosts was highlighted both in the arts of Byzantium and of Kyivan Rus', is given due prominence. The reused *loros* embroideries of the burial caftan are of course deployed on the wrong sort of garment by Byzantine standards. They nonetheless follow the disposition of the decorative elements of the *loros* costume as worn by Byzantine emperors. The garments thus demonstrate an understanding of the *lingua franca* of royal power in the Eastern Mediterranean zone. Elements are reused in ways that may or may not reflect their original purpose, but remain consistent with the way similar elements might have been deployed in their culture of origin. The garments do not, however, directly imitate any one sartorial source, thus avoiding the danger of being "pinned down" into another culture's hierarchy of dress.

The belts give us corroborating evidence for the kind of dynamic of reuse in the Chungul burial. Two of the three belts mentioned above were found on the body of the deceased, connected with the inner and outer garments. The belt furnishings, including the silver claddings for the tip of the belt and struts for stiffening the fabric webbing, are typical of thirteenth-century belts from Western Europe and the Crusader States.⁹⁴ What is unusual, however, is the positions in which they were found. In the process of excavation, the inner belt on the body was found upside down, lying open across the hips of the deceased. The outer belt around the caftan was likewise placed around the body upside down, such that the suspension rings attached to it pointed towards the head of the deceased. In this case, the belt was threaded through the buckle but not fastened.⁹⁵ Clearly, the belts could not have been employed in such a position in life. The very presence of the bulky cast



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Torso of caftan from Moshchevaia Balka, 19th century. Silk. State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. no. KZ 6733. After Ierusalimskaia and Borkopp, *Von China nach Byzanz*, cat. no. 3

silver siren buckle on an inner garment is contrary to sartorial logic. Rather, the unusual situation of the belts appears to reflect Turkic ritual practices involving supplication to higher-ranked individuals and to deities.⁹⁶ In documents relating to the Türks and Mongols, the rite of supplication involved both the removal of the belt from the waist and its placement around the neck. Thus the *Secret History of the Mongols* describes both Genghis Khan's worship of Burqan Qaldun through such a rite and, *mutatis mutandis*, his brother Qasar's submission to Genghis Khan himself.⁹⁷ The open belts around the waist of the body from the Chungul Kurgan also help to make sense of the enormous round chain about the neck. Circular in form and made of electrum mesh, its dimensions are more than adequate for it to be regarded not as a necklace, but as a belt. Furthermore, the rings that clasp its ends together are soldered shut in what may be another ritual act of "sealing" the body in a state of supplication to Tangrı and the gods of the afterlife. One can compare it to the very similar belt worn by a seated figure in a Seljuk relief from Konya.⁹⁸ The two belts of Western European manufacture, and a third perhaps of Anatolian origin, are here also redeployed in the service of Turkic religious rites.

The evidence for reuse and haste that the detailed examination of the textiles has uncovered nuances, rather than negates, our initial impressions. The fact that at least one of the caftans from the burial was unlikely to have been worn in life freights them with even more symbolic significance. On the one hand, clothing that is "usable" only in death recalls the class of Chinese burial goods known as "spirit articles" (*ming qi*), which are differentiated from normal objects used in life by their non-durable construction.⁹⁹ It may also be the case that the deceased's own garments extant at the time of his death were reconfigured and enriched with the addition of material from the Kıpçak treasury of gifts and spolia, so that their splendor might befit the dignity of his burial. In such a scenario, artisans would have

had to work quickly to employ the embroideries and other materials they had at hand to create the garments that would accompany the “prince” into the afterlife. The intrinsic value of the gold- and pearl-incrusted textiles fits the larger pattern of collection observed among the other high-value grave goods from the Chungul Kurgan.

The caftans buried with the Kıpçak “prince” present a palimpsest of nomadic, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean features, reflecting in their structure and decoration both the inherited polity of the Kıpçaks and their extensive relations with their sedentary neighbors. On the other hand, the very associations with sedentary kingdoms that brought the Kıpçaks military aid and status, and material prosperity, also threatened the continuity of their religious traditions.¹⁰⁰ Despite the advances of Christianity (in both its Greek and Latin forms) among the Kıpçaks in the early thirteenth century, the funerary ritual in the Chungul Kurgan, with its sacrifices of horses, sheep, and a human victim slain and buried at the conclusion of the burial rite, was emphatically shamanist.¹⁰¹ It was surely no accident that the Kıpçak warrior’s burial was inserted into a pre-existing burial mound of prehistoric date, which was then enlarged to monumental scale.¹⁰² Just as the Western European belts were buried inverted and unfastened to signify supplication to the shamanic gods of the afterlife, the caftans redeploy material from the Mediterranean world in a manner that fits the priorities of Turkic ceremonial and belief. Like the other aspects of the burial, the caftans reassert the ancient nomadic traditions of the Kıpçak confederation at a moment of crisis. They are a rare and precious testimony to nomadic self-definition in a world soon to be submerged by the rise of the Mongol empire.

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NOTES

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- 1 All transliterations of modern Ukrainian and Russian names follow the Library of Congress system. For historical proper names, we have relied on the system adopted in M. Hrushevsky, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, trans. M. Skorupsky (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1997–).
- 2 For the first notice of the excavation results, see V. Otroshchenko, "Raskopki kurganov v Zaporozhskoi oblasti" [Excavations of kurgans in the Zaporozh'e Oblast'], *Arkheologicheskie otkrytiia 1981 goda* (1983), 300–302; a fuller report appeared in V. Otroshchenko and Y.

Rassamakin, "Polovets'kyi kompleks Chynhul'skoho kurhanu" (The Polovtsian complex of the Chynhul Kurgan), *Arkheolohiia* 53 (1986): 14–36.

- 3 O. Halenko observed this on a detailed military map of the area along the border between Russia and Turkey as it stood at the end of the eighteenth century, drawn and engraved at the Imperial Depot of Maps in 1800: National Library of Ukraine, Department of Maps, No. 12610. The Slavic name of the Molochna River, meaning "milky," is a calque from its Turkish name of "Süten": O. Pritsak, "The Polovcians and Rus'," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982): 334.
- 4 J. W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (Constantinople: Printed for the American Mission by A. H. Boyajian, 1890), 740, s.v. چونگول / *chungül*. In 1641 the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, who crossed this area, reported in his travelogue (the *Seyahat-name*), that the shores of the River Molochna (Süt nehri) were marshy, allegedly resulting in one hundred horses and fifty captives of the Tatars being drowned there: Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnamesi* (Constantinople, AH 1314/1896), 2:485.
- 5 Otroshchenko and Rassamakin, "Polovets'kyi kompleks," 14.
- 6 On the excavation technique, see now Y. Rassamakin and R. Holod, "Turkic Burial: The Excavation of a Kurgan and the Reconstruction of its Construction Processes" (forthcoming).
- 7 Otroshchenko, "Raskopki kurganov," 300–301; V. V. Otroshchenko and S. Zh. Pustovalov, "Obriad modelirovaniia litsa po cherepu u plemen katakombnoi obshchnosti" [The ritual of modeling the face on the skull among a tribe of the Catacomb Culture polity], in *Dukhovnaia kul'tura drevnikh obshchestv na territorii Ukraini* [Religious culture of ancient polities in the territory of Ukraine], ed. V.

- F. Gening (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1991), 59–84.
- 8 B. Hanks, “Iron Age Nomadic Burials of the Eurasian Steppe: A Discussion Exploring Burial Ritual Complexity,” in *Kurgans, Ritual Sites, and Settlements, Eurasian Bronze and Iron Age*, ed. J. Davis-Kimball et al., BAR International Series 890 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), 24–25; A. I. Kubyshev, “Novye pogrebenie srednevekovykh kochevnikov XI–XIII vv. v stepom Prysyvashie” [New burials of medieval nomads of the eleventh–thirteenth centuries in the steppe coastlands of the Syvash], *Mezhdunarodnye svyazi v srednevekovo Evrope* [International relations in medieval Europe] (Zaporizhzhia: Zaporizhzhia State University, 1988), 44–46. Also see O. Halenko and Y. Rassamakin, “On the Meaning of the Landscape in the Location of the Chungul Kurgan Burial” (forthcoming).
- 9 The following is a summary account of the reconstructed ritual; for a full discussion and reconstruction of the process, see Rassamakin and Holod, “Turkic Burial” (forthcoming). For an earlier summary of the burial rite, see Otroshchenko and Rassamakin, “Polovets’kyi kompleks,” 15–18.
- 10 The 6 cm long fissure in the back of the skull, likely caused by the blow of a sword, may not have been the immediate cause of death. A reexamination of evidence from the skeleton will form part of the final publication of the burial. For now, see the preliminary examination of the remains by M. Schultz, “Archäologische Skelettfunde als Spiegel der Lebensbedingungen früher Viehzüchter und Nomaden in der Ukraine,” in *Gold der Steppe: Archäologie der Ukraine*, ed. R. Rolle et al. (Schleswig: Archäologisches Landesmuseum, 1991), 41–42.
- 11 William of Rubruck, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*, trans. P. Jackson (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), 93; E. Tryjarski, *Bestattungssitten türkischer Völker auf dem Hintergrund ihrer Glaubensvorstellungen* (Berlin: Reinhold Schletzer, 2001), 199–205.
- 12 The terminology for leaders of the Kıpçak confederation is a vexed issue. We are following the usage introduced by Peter Golden, “Cumanica I: The Qipčaq in Georgia,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 4 (1984): 70, following the Rus’ chronicles.
- 13 The conservation and analysis of the textile remains are ongoing as of the time of writing. Final results, including detailed information on weave structure, will be published in the book-length study of the burial.
- 14 The rationale for the dating of the individual artifacts, as well as the dating of the complex as a whole, will be discussed thoroughly in the forthcoming monograph on the burial.
- 15 On the ethnogenesis of the Kıpçaks, see P. Golden, “The Qipčaq of Medieval Eurasia: An Example of Stateless Adaptation in the Steppes,” in *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*, ed. G. Seaman and D. Marks (Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, 1991), 133. For an exploration of Kıpçak identity through Arab sources, see D. Korobeinikov, “A Broken Mirror: The Kipčak World of the Thirteenth Century,” in *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages: Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans*, ed. F. Curta and R. Kovalev (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 329–412.
- 16 Pritsak, “Polovcians and Rus,” 373; A. Savvides, “Hoi Komanoi (Koumanoi) kai to Byzantio 11–13 ai. m. Chr.” [The Comans (Cumans) and Byzantium in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries after Christ], *Byzantina* 13, no. 2 (1985): 945–56; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, VIII, iii–vi, ed. D. Reinsch and A. Kambylis, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 40 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 240–51.
- 17 Korobeinikov, “A Broken Mirror,” 387–91. The primary sources are not consistent in the dating of the Mongol conquest over the Kıpçaks. Rashid al-Din dates the final Mongol war with the Kıpçaks to the summer of 1236. Rashid al-Din, *Sbornik letopisei* (Compendium of chronicles), vol. 2, trans. Iu. P. Verkhovskii, ed. I. P. Petrushevskii (Moscow and Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk S.S.S.R., 1960), 38. Cf. the varying chronology given in B. Spuler, *Die goldene Horde: Die Mongolen in Rußland* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965), 11–17; E. V. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* (London: Kegan Paul, 1910), 1:300–301, 310–12. See also the reference by the Byzantine historian Nikephoros Gregoras to the flight of the Kıpçaks across the Danube to escape the invading Mongols: *Historia* I, ii, 5, ed. L. Schopen, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia*, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae 6 (Bonn: Weber, 1829), 1:36.
- 18 Pritsak, “Polovcians and Rus,” 374–78. The raids of the Kıpçaks were noted in the Hypatian Chronicle beginning prior to a peace agreement of 1055 and continuing on a fairly regular basis. Often the Kıpçak forces appear as allies or mercenaries in the internecine battles of Rus’ princes; thus a partial list of raids, pillage, and plunder: 1066, 1068, 1078, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1096 (plunder and burning of the Lavra in Kyiv), 1106 (Zarechesk), 1107, 1136 (Krasna, Trepol’, Vasiliv, Bilhorod up to Kyiv), 1148 (Dristra), 1152 (Vlatic, Mtsensk, Hlukhiv, Chernihiv), 1154 (Pereyaslav), 1180 (Suzdal’), 1165, 1171 (Kyiv), 1172 (Korsun’), 1174 (Ros’ River region), 1177 (Pereyaslav), 1185 (Pereyaslav area, Rimov, Putivl’), 1187, 1196 (Suzdal’).

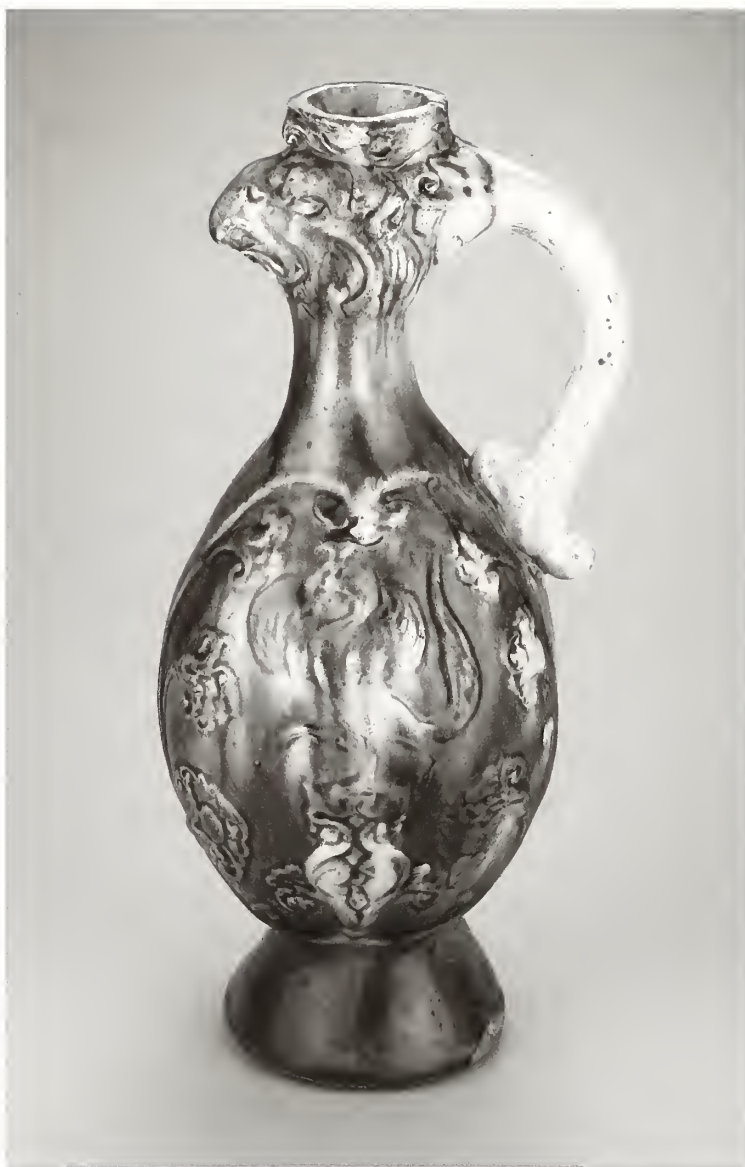
- In 1206, they are the allies of Roman of Halych against the Hungarians, and then in 1217–19 of Mstyslav of Halych, again in the Hungarian conflict: *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* [Full compendium of Russian chronicles (hereafter, *PSRL*)], vol. 2, ed. A. A. Shakhmatov, 2nd edition (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Arkheograficheskaia kommissiia, 1908).
- 19 Hypatian Chronicle, *PSRL* 2: cols. 334.
 - 20 Pritsak, "Polovcians and Rus," 369, 377, 378.
 - 21 Pritsak, "Polovcians and Rus," 373, 375–76.
 - 22 P. Golden, "Cumanica I: The Qipčaq in Georgia," 45–87; A. Khazanov and A. Wink, *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000), 49.
 - 23 Savvides, "Komanoi kai to Byzantio," 947–48.
 - 24 C. Halperin, "The Kipchak Connection: The Ilkhans, the Mamluks and Ayn Jalut," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 63 (2000): 231–35; S. M. Akhinzhanov, "Kipčaks and Khwarazm," in *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*, ed. G. Seaman and D. Marks (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1991), 126–31.
 - 25 Monomakh's campaigns against the Kipčaks are documented sporadically from 1103 to 1116: Golden, "The Qipčaq in Georgia," 70–71; *PSRL* 1, cols. 277–89; 2, cols. 250, 258–60, 264–68, 284.
 - 26 J. Fennell, "The Tatar Invasion of 1223," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* 27 (1980): 18–31; *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471*, trans. R. Michell and N. Forbes (London: Camden Society, 1914), 64–66; *PSRL* 2, cols. 740–45; M. Dimnik, *The Dynasty of Chernigov, 1146–1246* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 292–98; C. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 45–46; Spuler, *Die goldene Horde*, 12–13; Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:295. The Kalka is now generally identified with the Kal'mius River or, more precisely, its tributary the Kal'chuk (Pritsak, "Polovcians and Rus," 357). Contrary to Spuler's indication, the Kal'mius debouches into the Sea of Azov at Mariupol', not Taganrog.
 - 27 On this practice among the Turkic peoples in general, including the Kipčaks, see Tryjarski, *Bestattungssitten türkischer Völker*, 199–205.
 - 28 Albericus Trium Fontium, *Chronicon*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, 23:950; I. Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 66.
 - 29 Iu. Rassamakin, "Pogrebenie znatnogo kochevnika na reke Molochnoi: Opyt rekonstruktsii veshchevogo kompleksa" [The burial of a noble nomad on the Molochna River: an attempt at the reconstruction of the grave goods], in *Stepy Evropy v epokhu srednevekov'ia* (The European Steppes in the Middle Ages), ed. A. V. Evglevskii, vol. 3, *Polovetsko-zolotoordynskoe vremia* (The Polovets and Golden Horde Times) (Donetsk: Donetsk National University, 2003), 207–30. Compare also the Kipčak burial with a horse and cart found at Bolshemikhailovka: V. N. Shalobudov and V. N. Iaremaka, "Kochevnicheskie zakhoroneniia X–XII vv. na r. Volch'ei" [Nomadic burials of the tenth–twelfth centuries on the River Volch'ia], *Problemy arkheologii Podneprov'ia* [Problems in the archaeology of the lower Dnepr basin] (Dnepropetrovsk: Dnepropetrovsk State University, 1985), 138–53.
 - 30 Tryjarski, *Bestattungssitten türkischer Völker*, 45ff, 93, 127–28, 345. On the unpublished Kipčak burial, see further Rassamakin and Holod, "Turkic Burial."
 - 31 A. V. Evglevskii, "Semantika raspriamlen-nykh griven v kontekste pogrebal'nogo obriada kochevnikov Vostochnoi Evropy XII–XIV vv." [The semantics of straightened *grivna* in the context of the burial rites of the nomads of Eastern Europe, twelfth–fourteenth centuries], *Arkheologicheskii al'manakh* 7 (1998), 141–56. The Museum of Historical Treasures in Kyiv preserves a bent gold torque found as part of a treasure trove (buried in two earthenware pots) at the village of Sakhnivka, Cherkas'ka oblast', dated by context to the eleventh to twelfth centuries. The site lies within the historic boundaries of Kyivan territory: G. F. Korzukhina, *Russkie klady IX–XIII vv.* [Rus' treasures, ninth–thirteenth centuries], (Moscow and Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk S.S.S.R., 1954), 46, 49, 131, cat. no. 127.
 - 32 Tryjarski, *Bestattungssitten türkischer Völker*, 196; S. A. Pletneva, *Polovtsy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), 122–29.
 - 33 Korobeinikov, "A Broken Mirror," 391–93, has developed a careful reconstruction of the events after the 1238 defeat, including Mongol destruction of Kyiv of 1240, and their advance through Hungary and southwest to Split, whence they returned in 1242 via Bosnia, Serbia, and Bulgaria again to the *Dasht-i Kipčak*. He also proposes that a Mongol detachment or administration would have been left in this conquered area from 1239 to 1242, referring also to the Hypatian Chronicle which records that Batu sent troops from the *Dasht-i Kipčak* in 1239–40 to take Pereyaslav. See also Spuler, *Die goldene Horde*, 19.
 - 34 As noted elsewhere, the post-excavation history of the textiles has resulted in difficult conditions for the reconstruction of the garments. Conservation and analysis is ongoing; final results will appear in the book-length publication of the burial.

- 35 The bottom part of this piece is covered by the narrower ribbon of the waistband, indicating that the latter was sewn on last, covering the seams of the caftan's construction.
- 36 This category of bands, traditionally known as "Palermitaner Borte," includes the twelfth-century belt of the *Reichsschwert* of the Holy Roman Empire (Vienna, Weltliche Schatzkammer, inv. no. XIII.9), published in *Nobiles Officinae: Perle, filigrane e trame di seta dal Palazzo Reale di Palermo*, vol. 1 (Catania: Giuseppe Maimone, 2006), 64–65, 95, cat. no. I.6; and M. Schulze-Dörlamm, *Das Reichsschwert* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1995), 30–34; the majority of the bands on the twelfth-century *sandalia* from the coronation regalia in Vienna (Weltliche Schatzkammer, inv. no. XIII.13), published in *Nobiles Officinae*, 62–63, cat. no. I.5; and N. Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance: A Thousand Years of Brocaded Tabletweoven Bands* (Jarrettsville, Md.: Arelate Studio, 2000), 32, 206; the orphreys of the alb of St. Bernulf in Utrecht (1028–1056, dated twelfth century; Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catherijneconvent), published in M. Fleury-Lemberg, *Textile Conservation and Research* (Bern: Abegg-Stiftung, 1988), 190–95, where the gold bands are incorrectly classified as tablet weaving, cf. Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*, 23, 257; eleventh–twelfth century gold bands found in the graves of Bamberg Cathedral (Diözesanmuseum, Munich, inv. nos. M53, M54), published in *Textile Grabfunde aus der Sepultur des Bamberger Domkapitels*, ed. Hannelore Herrmann and York Langenstein (Munich: Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 1987), 182, 183; fragments of gold bands from Tongeren and Sint-Truiden, Belgium, published in D. De Jonghe, "De textieldocumenten uit Sint-Truiden: Technologische bevindingen" [Textile documents of Sint-Truiden: technological findings], in *Stof uit de kist: De middeleeuwse textielschat uit de abdij van Sint-Truiden* [Fabric from the chest: the medieval textile treasures from the Abbey of Sint-Truiden] (Sint-Truiden: Peeters, 1991), 71–75, 283–86; and a miter from Brixen (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 46.156.31), published in E. B. Sachs, "Some Notes on a Twelfth-Century Bishop's Mitre in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* 61 (1978): 4–5. On medieval tablet-weaves in the strict sense of the term, see Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*.
- 37 Our thanks to Christine Weller for calculating this approximation.
- 38 M. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 22.
- 39 The *toga picta* of the late Roman empire, however, could be represented as having embroidered images, as, for example, on the consular diptych of Areobindus. Cf. W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz: Von Zabern, 1976), nos. 10, 33.
- 40 Z. Gavrilović, "Observations on the Iconography of St. Kyriake, Principally in Cyprus," in *Lampēdōn: Aphierōma stē mnēmē tēs Doulas Mourikē* (Athens: University Presses, 2003), 1:255–64.
- 41 *L'Europe Gothique XII^e–XIV^e siècles* (Paris: RNM, 1968), no. 399, pl. 118; C. R. af Ugglas, *Gotländska silverskatter från Valdermarstågets tid* [Gotland silver treasures from the time of Valdemarstaget] (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1936); idem, "Det stora bältespannet i Duneskatten jämte en omprövning av den gotländska Tingstäde-mästarens kronologi." [The large belt buckle in the Dune Treasure with a review of the chronology of the Gotland Tingstäde Master], *Fornvännen* 32 (1937): 257–74.
- 42 On these so-called "profilerte" buckles, see with caution I. Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1971), 58–77.
- 43 F. Bock, *Geschichte der liturgischen Gewänder des Mittelalters* (Bonn: Max Cohen & Sohn, 1866), 2:55. Our sincere thanks to the retreat house of La Cour Dieu at La Roche-en-Brenil for providing photographs of the belt.
- 44 R. Koch, "Der Glasbecher der heiligen Elisabeth in Coburg," in *Sankt Elisabeth: Fürstin, Dienerin, Heilige* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1981), 281–82.
- 45 Vienna, Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, inv. no. F 285; *Enamels of Limoges: 1100–1300* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 287, cat. no. 91.
- 46 Fingerlin regards the portal sculptures of the Wise and Foolish Virgins at Magdeburg Cathedral as the earliest examples of the type: Fingerlin, *Gürtel*, 65, 68. To this example may be added the famed statue of the founder Eckhart at Naumburg Cathedral, ca. 1245, and the funerary effigy of Jean d'Alluye (ca. 1248) in The Cloisters in New York. On the tomb effigy, see H. Nickel, "A Crusader's Sword: Concerning the Effigy of Jean d'Alluye," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (1991): 123–28.
- 47 As argued by Ortwin Gamber in "Die Bewaffnung der Stauferzeit," in *Die Zeit der Staufer* (Stuttgart: Württembergisches Landesmuseum, 1977), 3:114. We owe this reference to Dirk Breiding.
- 48 D. A. Hinton, *Gold and Gilt, Pots and Pins: Possessions and People in Medieval Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 196–99.
- 49 S. Blair, "Inscriptions on Medieval Islamic Textiles," in *Islamische Textilkunst des Mittelalters: Aktuelle Probleme*, ed. M. 'Abbās Muḥammad Salīm, Riggisberger

- Berichte 5 (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 1997), 97–100; J. Ball, *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 67–68; Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 54.
- 50 See note 34, above.
- 51 The resulting reconstructions by the Russian textile conservator A. K. Ėlkina are incorrect in numerous significant respects: A. K. Ėlkina, “Redchaishie obraztsy vizantiiskogo shit’ia i tkachestva” [Unique examples of Byzantine embroidery and weaving], *Nauka i zhizn’* 7 (1983): 80–82; German translation “Seidene Kaftane und Goldstickereien aus Byzanz,” in *Gold der Steppe: Archäologie der Ukraine*, ed. R. Rolle et al. (Schleswig: Wachholtz, 1991), 274–75.
- 52 G. Millet, *Broderies religieuses de style byzantine*, 2 vols (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1939, 1947); W. Woodfin, “Liturgical Textiles,” in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. H. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 295–96; idem, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). For gold embroidery from Kyivan Rus’, see M. A. Novitskaia, “Zolotnaia vyshivka Kievskoi Rusi” [Gold embroidery of Kievan Rus’], *Byzantinoslavica* 33 (1972): 42–50.
- 53 There is somewhat more evidence for animal imagery as decoration on Byzantine imperial costume. See H. Maguire and L. Jones, “A Description of the Jousts of Manuel I Komnenos,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26 (2002): 108, 128–36.
- 54 On this image see most recently A. Eastmond, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 139–51.
- 55 A. Muthesius, “Silk in the Medieval World,” in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, ed. D. Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1:343; R. Schorta, *Monochrome Seidengewebe des hohen Mittelalters* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2001), 12–16, 30–33.
- 56 N. A. Stillman in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill), s.v. *khila*.
- 57 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 57–58; Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 69–70; S. Pelekanides and M. Chatzedakes, *Kastoria* (Athens: Melissa, 1985), 39, 43, plate 23.
- 58 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 332, pl. 76; A. Bank, *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobraniakh SSSR* [Art of Byzantium in the collections of the U.S.S.R.] (Moscow: Sovetskii Khudozhnik, 1977), 3:159, cat. no. 1010.
- 59 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 58, 60; eadem, “Cultural Identity and Dress: The Case of Late Byzantine Ceremonial Costume,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 57 (2007): 106; Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 64; L. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Geneva: Albert Kundig, 1952), 21–22; D. Nicolle, *Early Medieval Arts and Armour* (Jarandilla: Instituto de Estudios sobre Armas Antiguas, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato Menéndez y Pelayo, 1976), 84, 86–87, 88–89; R. Levy, “Notes on Costume from Arabic Sources,” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 2 (1935): 324.
- 60 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 60; B. Hemmerdinger, “158 noms comuns grecs d’origine iranienne, d’Eschyle au grec modern,” *Byzantinoslavica* 30 (1969): 28; Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. J. Verpeaux, *Traité des offices* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1966), 206.
- 61 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 61 n. 38.
- 62 E. I. Stillman, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill), s.v. “Libās.”
- 63 J. Martin, *Treasure of the Land of Darkness: The Fur Trade and its Significance for Medieval Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 23–27, 117–18.
- 64 Mayer, *Mamluk Costume*, 25.
- 65 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi 2961, and St. Petersburg, Library of the Oriental Institute, S. 23.
- 66 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. arabe 5847; O. Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 116–17.
- 67 Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, MS. A. F. 10, fols. 1r and 3a; O. Pancaroğlu, “Socializing Medicine: Illustrations of the *Kitāb al-Diryaq*,” *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 155–72. See the frontispieces of the multi-volume *Kitāb al-Aghānī* copy made for Badr al-Dīn Lu’lu’, and specifically those of volumes 17 and 19 today found in Istanbul, Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Feyzullah Efendi 1565 and 1566. For a reproduction of the latter see *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600*, ed. D. Roxburgh (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 390–91, cat. no. 54. For further discussion of public representation of rulers and their “royal” iconography, see E. Whelan, *The Public Figure: Political Iconography in Medieval Mesopotamia* (London: Melisende, 2006).
- 68 Lusterware as well as *mina’i*. For example, a large *mina’i* plate with a siege scene records the details of the costumes of the victors (Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, no. 43.3, illustrated in E. Sims et al., *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 92–93. Also see O. Watson, *Ceramics from Islamic Lands* (London: Thames & Hudson, in association with the al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait National Museum, 2004), pp. 348–71.
- 69 Meyer, *Mamluk Costume*, 21–22 n. 1; William of Rubruck, *Mission*, 93–96;

- M. Komroff, ed., *Contemporaries of Marco Polo* (New York: Liveright, 1928), 5, 69.
- 70 On the history of the caftan form in Inner Eurasia, see E. R. Knauer, "A Man's Caftan and Leggings from the North Caucasus of the Eighth to Tenth Century: A Genealogical Study," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Journal* 36 (2001): 125–54.
- 71 A. Muthesius, "Essential Processes, Looms, and Technical Aspects of the Production of Silk Textiles," in *The Economic History of Byzantium*, ed. A. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 158–60.
- 72 J. Hofenk de Graaff and M. van Bommel, "Maestri tintori alla corte di Sicilia," in *Nobiles Officinae*, 2:159–161.
- 73 Lampas with ground in lousine (i.e., extended tabby with doubled main warps), two colors of supplementary weft bound in tabby by the single binding warp.
- 74 R. Schorta, "Zur Entwicklung der Lampastechnik," in *Islamische Textilkunst des Mittelalters*, 139–43; eadem, *Monochrome Seidengewebe*, 34–51; A. Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 1997), 85–87; L. von Wilckens, *Die textilen Künste von der Spätantike bis um 1500* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991), 67–74.
- 75 Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 38–39; von Wilckens, *Textile Künste*, 52–54.
- 76 A. Gonosová, in *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261*, ed. H. Evans and W. Wixom (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 226, cat. no. 150; Schorta, *Monochrome Seidengewebe*, 48, 137–38; cat. nos. 176, 194.
- 77 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 18–19.
- 78 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 19–20.
- 79 Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, 22.
- 80 K. N. Sathas, ed., *Mesaionikē biblothēkē* (Athens, Venice, Paris, 1872; repr. Athens: V. N. Gregoriades, 1972), 1:172–73; S. Ćurčić, *Gračanica: King Milutin's Church and Its Place in Late Byzantine Architecture* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1979), 6. The authors thank Slobodan Ćurčić for this reference. See also C. Walter, "The Iconographical Sources for the Coronation of Milutin and Simonida at Gračanica," in *Vizantijska umetnost početkom XIV veka (L'art byzantin au début du XIV^e siècle)*, ed. S. Petković (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, Odeljenje za istoriju umetnosti, 1978), 183–200.
- 81 R. Bauer, in *Nobiles Officinae*, 1:77–78, cat. no. 1.10; eadem, "Il manto di Ruggero II e le vesti regie," in *Nobiles Officinae*, 2:179–80, figs. 13–14.
- 82 The present opinion of the excavator, Y. Rassamakin, is that the fragment originally formed part of the back of the caftan, but the state of preservation makes it difficult to determine its original placement definitively.
- 83 The attempt by Nimchuk to read the epigraphy fails to consider that the inscription is a truncated fragment: V. Nimchuk, "Znakhidka z Chynhul's'koi Mohyly" [A find from the Chynhul Tumulus], *Nauka i Kul'tura* 23 (1989), 280–84.
- 84 The ground textile of the embroidered ornamental panel is samite, while the ground of the embroidered archangel and donor is most likely weft-faced compound tabby, or taqueté. The lack of a preserved selvedge makes the positive identification of the weave difficult.
- 85 On donors' incorporation into compositions involving holy persons, see N. P. Ševčenko, "Close Encounters: Contact between Holy Figures and the Faithful as Represented in Byzantine Works of Art," in *Byzance et les images*, ed. A. Guillou (Paris: Musée du Louvre Editions, 1994), 257–85. On the theme of the *deesis*, see A. Cutler, "Under the Sign of the Deesis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 145–54.
- 86 S. A. Pletneva, *Polovetskie kamennye izvaianiia* (Polovtsian stone statues), *Svod Arkheologicheskikh Istochnikov* (Corpus of archaeological sources) E 4-2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), 33–38; A. Pálóczi-Horvath, *Le costume coman au moyen Age*, *Acta archaeologica Academiae Hungariae* 32, fasc. 1–4 (Budapest, 1980); A. Kerndl, "Vier in Berlin neu entdeckte Steinstatuen hochmittelalterlicher Reiternomaden," *Ansgrabungen in Berlin* 6 (1982): 213–23.
- 87 A. G. Pleshchyenko, "Kaftan iz polovetskogo pogrebeniia" [A caftan from a Polovtsian burial], in *Mezhdunarodnye svyazi v srednevekovoi Evrope* [International relations in medieval Europe] (Zaporizhzhia: Zaporizhzhia State University, 1988), 47–48; V. F. Rzhiga, "O tkanakh do-mongol'skoi Rusi" [On the textiles of pre-Mongol Rus'], *Byzantino-slavica* 4 (1932): 399–403.
- 88 A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998), 13–17, 49, 103–104, 109, plates XI, XIII, XIV, XVII.
- 89 It is thus far unclear whether the same method of attachment was followed for the burial caftan with the "loros" decoration.
- 90 Hypatian Chronicle, *PSRL* 2: col. 281.
- 91 State Hermitage, inv. no. Kz 6584; A. A. Ierusalimskaia and B. Borkopp, *Von China nach Byzanz: frühmittelalterliche Seiden aus der Staatlichen Ermitage Sankt Petersburg* (Munich: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 1996), 19–21, cat. no. 1.
- 92 M. V. Vlaskin et al., *Pogrebeniia znati zolotoordynskogo vremeni v mezhdurech'e Dona i Sala* [The burial of a noble of the Golden Horde period in the region between the Don and Sal Rivers], *Materialy po izucheniiu istoriko-kul'turnogo nasledii Severnogo Kavkaza*

- (Materials for the study of the historico-cultural heritage of the north Caucasus) 6 (Moscow: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2006). The embroidery itself is not yet published; our sincere thanks to Dr. Zvezdana Dode for sharing images of this important find.
- 93 R. Nelson, "Appropriation," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. R. Nelson and R. Shiff, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 160–72; A. Cutler, "Reuse or Use? Theoretical and Practical Attitudes towards Objects in the Early Middle Ages," in *Ideologie e Pratiche del Reimpiego nell'Alto Medioevo*, vol. 2 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1999), 1055–83. For medieval use of spolia in general, see D. Kinney, "The Concept of Spolia," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. C. Rudolph (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 233–52; on textile reuse in particular, see M. J. Feliciano, "Muslim Shrouds for Christian Kings? A Reassessment of Andalusi Textiles in Thirteenth-Century Castilian Life and Ritual," in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, ed. C. Robinson and L. Rouhi (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 101–31.
- 94 Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, 14–21.
- 95 Rassamakin and Holod, "Turkic Burial," forthcoming.
- 96 J.-P. Roux, *Études d'iconographie islamique: Quelques objets numineux des Turcs et des Mongols* (Leuven: Peeters, 1982), 9–19. China, like ancient Rome, seems to have distributed belts to its "barbarian" allies as signs of office, with the accompanying idea of inserting them into the hierarchy of their own control: Roux, *Quelques objets numineux*, 9–11. On similar practices in the Roman empire, see I. M. Johannsen, "Rings, Fibulae and Buckles with Imperial Portraits and Inscriptions," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 7 (1994): 229–31.
- 97 Roux, *Quelques objets*, 12–17.
- 98 Roux, *Quelques objets*, fig. 9. The stone relief is in the Konya Museum; it has not been studied in detail.
- 99 Wu Hung, "On Tomb Figurines," in Wu Hung and K. Tsiang, eds., *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 13–14 n. 5. Compare also the clothing made of paper found in tombs of the Turfan oasis: V. Hansen in *The Glory of the Silk Road: Art from Ancient China*, ed. J. Lee and V. Hansen (Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Art Institute, 2003), 35, cat. no. 47. Our thanks to Prof. Kate Lingley for both references.
- 100 We can assume that virtually every documented marriage of an Orthodox Christian to a Kıpçak was preceded by the baptism of the Kıpçak party. Whether such baptisms constituted religious "conversion" in a modern, interior sense is a very much more difficult question.
- 101 Rassamakin and Holod, "Turkic Burial," forthcoming. On the religion of the Kıpçaks, see P. Golden, "Religion among the Qipčaks of Medieval Eurasia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 42 (1998): 180–237; I. Baldick, *Animal and Shaman: Ancient Religions of Central Asia* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 52–54; V. Spinei, "The Cuman Bishopric: Genesis and Evolution," in *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages: Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans*, ed. F. Curta and R. Kovalev (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 413–56; D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1994).
- 102 Halenko and Rassamakin, "On the Meaning of Landscape," forthcoming.



PATTERNS OF FLIGHT

Middle Byzantine Adoptions of the Chinese Feng Huang Bird

1 (OPPOSITE)

Ewer, Tang dynasty, 700–750.
 Earthenware with molded decoration
 and three-color (*sancai*) lead glazes,
 height 32.2 cm, diameter 13 cm. The
 Art Institute of Chicago. Gift of
 Pauline Palmer Wood, 1970.1076.
 Photography © The Art Institute of
 Chicago

Abstract

Theories of artistic diffusion played a prominent role in art historical scholarship of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but more recently diffusionism has fallen from favor, in part because of its association with the reductive applications of an earlier era. Yet important advances in diffusion, network, and adoption analysis forged in the social sciences since the mid-twentieth century — which have not yet actively impacted art historical inquiry — offer new possibilities for theorizing artistic diffusion. This article evaluates diffusionism in its newer forms and explores the usefulness of these theories for the analysis of medieval cross-cultural artistic transmission, specifically the middle Byzantine adoption of the medieval Chinese *feng huang* bird. A shift in emphasis from the rate and extent of adoption to questions of how and why individual instances of adoption were carried out features prominently in current diffusion analysis techniques and is useful for the study of medieval luxury objects, which are typically characterized by small sample sets of limited dissemination that nonetheless suggest varied and complex processes of adoption. In keeping with the aims of this volume, attention is paid to articulating methods and terminology that hold potential for application to other subfields of premodern art history.

WHETHER SELF-CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT, art historians tend to operate according to an assumption of diffusion, that is to say, we presume that artistic styles, motifs, and meanings spread from one area to another and that this process can be plotted and its significance interpreted. Theories of artistic diffusion enjoyed popularity in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship.¹ Diffusion continues to play a prominent role in recent studies of innovation transmission in the fields of public health, media studies, sociology, and political science, among others.² But within premodern art history and its sibling disciplines of anthropology and archaeology, diffusionism has fallen from favor, in part because of its association with overly reductive, universalist applications, particularly those of the early twentieth century.³ While techniques for the analysis of diffusion phenomena have continued to evolve in the social sciences, these methodological developments have not been brought to bear on art historical studies.

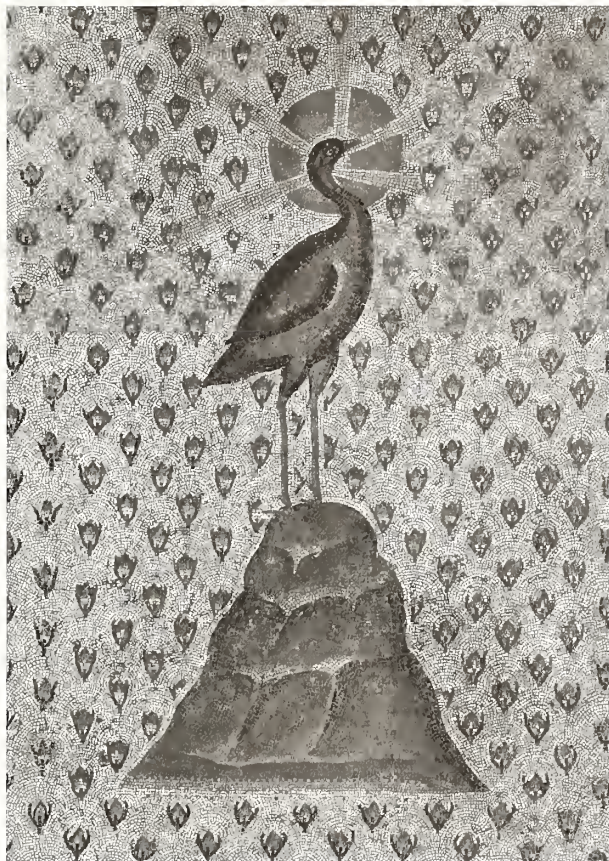
Rudolf Wittkower's famous study of 1939, "Eagle and Serpent: A Study in the Migration of Symbols," which traces a motif of animal attack across a dramatically broad geographic, chronological, and cultural span, has come to epitomize the shortcomings of the diffusionist approach in art history.⁴ Wittkower demonstrates an impressive command of iconography from a diversity of world cultures, arguing that images of an eagle attacking a snake are fundamentally connected across time

and space. He proposes that in all these contexts the motif maintained a consistent, essential significance, communicating the victory of good over evil. Yet his emphasis on symbolic commonality causes him to neglect or minimize important differences among the various instances of the motif that may have inflected its meaning, including their lack of stylistic unity and disparities among the contexts in which they appeared. In addition, some of his arguments for communications between discrete cultural and historical contexts are tenuous. Criticism of Wittkower's and similarly bold applications of diffusionism is certainly well-founded. Yet the rejection of some diffusionist methodologies does not change the fact that the phenomenon of diffusion continues to be relevant to studies of cross-cultural artistic exchange and, more recently, concepts of artistic "globalism," "trans-culturation," and cultural "encounter."⁵

This essay revisits the concept of diffusion as it relates to a case study of medieval cross-cultural artistic transmission, suggesting that revisions to traditional techniques of analysis offer a productive means of restructuring consideration of medieval artistic exchange. These new models — which fall under the general rubrics of network and adoption analysis — attend to individual instances of the adoption of new ideas and forms, judging micro-processes and -contexts as essential to understanding the success and failure of diffusion.⁶ They offer useful models for analyzing the small sample sets of limited dissemination that typify medieval luxury arts.

My case study is a group of six middle Byzantine (ca. 843–1204) works of art, each of which depicts the medieval Chinese *feng huang* bird (as seen in Figs. 1 and 3–7).⁷ They include two silver cups (Figs. 9–10), a lead seal (Fig. 12), a manuscript headpiece (Fig. 13), an ivory triptych (Fig. 14), and a purple-dyed ivory box (Fig. 15). All these objects are small-scale works that fall within the traditional art historical category of "minor" or "decorative" arts. I prefer the term "portable arts," which avoids the value judgment inherent in "minor" and "decorative," emphasizing instead the distinctive property of mobility that is common to these works of art.⁸ The objects date from the early tenth to early eleventh century, and their valuable media, refined craftsmanship, and/or association with the Byzantine social elite qualify them as luxury items.

In art historical literature, the *feng huang* is often referred to as a phoenix, but its form and meaning are distinct from those of the Roman–Byzantine phoenix bird. The latter has a compact body, long legs, and a small head; it is usually depicted standing and haloed (see Fig. 2). The phoenix's ability to regenerate from its own ashes led to its association with imperial succession and renewal in the pagan tradition and the resurrection of Christ in the Christian tradition.⁹ Earlier art historical studies conflate the phoenix and *feng huang*, but this elision inappropriately domesticates the motif, suppressing its exotic character and minimizing the phe-



2

2

Floor mosaic from the Villa of Daphnis near Antioch, Roman–Byzantine, late fifth century, from Harbiye, Turkey. Mosaic, 600 x 425 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, MA 3442. Photograph C. Jean / J. Schormans. © Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY

nomenon of diffusion it evinces. In order to retain recognition of the bird's foreign origin, I employ exclusively the Chinese term for the animal.¹⁰

The *feng huang* appears very rarely in non-Chinese works of art prior to the Mongol conquest in the mid-thirteenth century.¹¹ Indeed, to my knowledge, the six Byzantine objects that form the focus of this study are the only works of art produced outside China before circa 1250 that employ the motif. The fact that adoption of the *feng huang* was restricted to the upper echelons of Byzantine society and did not spread extensively throughout Byzantine artistic production renders it ill-suited for a traditional diffusionist study, which would assess a large-scale phenomenon and the rate and extent of its successful adoption. In contrast, network analysis—with its emphasis on the micro-process of adoption in individual instances—can be productively applied to situations of small-scale cross-cultural artistic transmission. In adapting these revised social science models to the study of medieval artistic dissemination, this essay contributes new perspective on the larger topic of cross-cultural artistic exchange in the premodern world, in particular by drawing attention to the tendency of medieval art history to under-theorize instances of inter-cultural artistic adoption that are attested in only limited or unique examples. Such situations should not be excluded from the broader discussion as aberrations or exceptions. Rather they attest to a category of cross-cultural exchange for which small data sets are the norm.

Instead of focusing on the logistics of transmission of the *feng huang* or the physical maps of diffusion that these transferences created, my investigation foregrounds questions of reception and “cognitive geography,” that is to say, Byzantine



3A

3A
Armrest covered with a brocade textile, Tang dynasty, eighth century. Silk, length 78.2 cm. Shosoin Treasury, National Museum, Nara, Japan. Photograph © Shosoin Treasury, National Museum, Nara, Japan



3B
Detail of 3A.

attitudes toward foreign places and peoples and the artistic forms that served as their surrogates.¹² This emphasis is dictated in part by the limited evidence documenting the process of the *feng huang*'s movement to the west, which makes it impossible to arrive at any definitive explanations of the mechanics of its transference. But the approach is also motivated by an abiding interest in what adoption of the *feng huang* might reflect about Byzantine attitudes toward exotic eastern cultures. This essay operates from the premise that Byzantine viewers' understanding of foreign works of art was embedded in (and can be deduced from) the ways that Byzantine patrons and designers chose to redeploy these models in their own artistic production.

In response to the call of this volume to theorize the method and vocabulary for the investigation of cross-cultural interactions, the present study posits a set of analytical terms that develop from the work of several scholars of premodern art history. Furthermore, the investigation is informed by revisions to diffusionism that take interest in the "failure" of innovations to disseminate throughout society and in the motivations and strategies behind their successful and unsuccessful adoptions.¹³ First the historical context within which the *feng huang* migrated from its Chinese origin to its Byzantine destination is briefly outlined, along with the limited but important evidence for direct and indirect diplomatic and commercial connections between these cultures during the late antique and medieval eras. The discussion then turns to diffusionism and network analysis, highlighting methods and terms that are productive — as well as those that are limiting — for the study of Byzantine objects depicting the *feng huang*. At the fore of this study are the concepts of adoption, appropriation, and expropriation, which I define as follows: Adoption is a neutral term, which refers to the act of employing an exogenous — and therefore innovative — form. Appropriation refers to instances of adoption in which the original form is reconfigured in order to serve better the intentions or needs of the adopters while still retaining an affiliation with its source. Expropriation entails a more radical reworking of the initial form, which results in a greater degree of dislocation from its original context and more extensive incorporation into the adopting culture's stylistic or semantic traditions.¹⁴

The subsequent analysis of the six instances in which the *feng huang* appears on Byzantine objects demonstrates how terms generated from earlier models for cross-cultural artistic exchange can be applied to the case study of this motif. Special attention is paid to distinguishing the different dynamics at play in each



4
Mirror, Tang dynasty, 618–907.
Bronze, width 26.4 cm. Freer Gallery
of Art, Purchase, F1929.17



5
Ornaments in the shape of the *feng
huang*, Tang dynasty, late seventh
to early eighth century. Gold sheet,
height 5.1 cm. Collection of Myron
S. Falk, Jr., New York. Photograph ©
Werner Forman / Art Resource, NY

instance of adoption, illuminating the way in which the six objects bespeak distinct types and degrees of appropriation and expropriation. In this respect, I emphasize the agency of Byzantine artists and patrons in selecting and negotiating this foreign motif and the significance of these individual instances of adoption to our broader understanding of Byzantine cross-cultural artistic interaction.¹⁵

From East to West: The Migration of the *Feng Huang*

The distinguishing features of the *feng huang* as it appears on Byzantine objects include the full, fluidly rendered wings, thin legs, pronounced head comb, and standing (as opposed to flying) pose.¹⁶ The bird is typically surrounded by dense foliage, a feature in keeping with Chinese literary tradition, which notes that the *feng huang* would alight only on branches of the paulownia tree.¹⁷ Although the majority of the most compelling comparanda for the *feng huang* in Byzantine art dates to the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) (Figs. 1 and 3–5), viable models are also found in art produced under the Liao (907–1125 CE) (Figs. 6 and 7) and Song (960–1279 CE) dynasties, which inherited and imitated Tang models. The long period of Tang rule was marked by relative unity and peace. In striking contrast, the tenth to eleventh centuries (when the *feng huang* appears in Byzantine art) witnessed political insecurity and dissolution. During this era China was ruled by several dynasties, some of whom reigned coterminously in different regions of the former Tang empire. The Liao (an ethnically non-Chinese dynasty of Turco-Mongol origin) controlled the north and northwest of China while the south was successively ruled by the Five Dynasties (907–960) and the Song.



6

6

Crown from the tomb of Princess Chen, Liao period, 1018 or earlier. Gilded silver, height 30 cm, diameter 19.5 cm. Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia. From Shen, *Gilded Splendor*, 102–103

In late antique and medieval Chinese culture, the *feng huang* was associated with the South and appears with other animals symbolizing the cardinal directions.¹⁸ Along with the dragon and the deer, the *feng huang* emerged in the Han era (206 BCE–220 CE) as a protective animal. For this reason, it was depicted extensively on funerary monuments, a practice that continued into the Tang period.¹⁹ During the Tang dynasty, however, important changes in artistic style took place. These transformations were stimulated in part by new models from western sources that moved eastward along the Silk Road during the seventh and the first half of the eighth century, when China endeavored to strengthen control over its Central Asian periphery in order to reinforce its northern borders against invasion.²⁰ At this time, the indigenous Chinese motif of the *feng huang* was gradually transferred from monumental—especially funerary—decoration to small-scale objects, some of which combined the Chinese bird motif with features adopted from western, especially Sasanian art.²¹

Spurred in part by the influx of foreign works of art from western regions such as Persia, early Tang artists increasingly incorporated animal motifs into the decoration of portable objects, including ceramic vessels (Fig. 1), textiles (Fig. 3), mirrors (Fig. 4), jewelry (Fig. 5), and metal vessels.²² Yet it is important to note that although the *feng huang* is often associated with the larger phenomenon of western cultural influx during the Tang era, no evidence suggests that the bird itself was



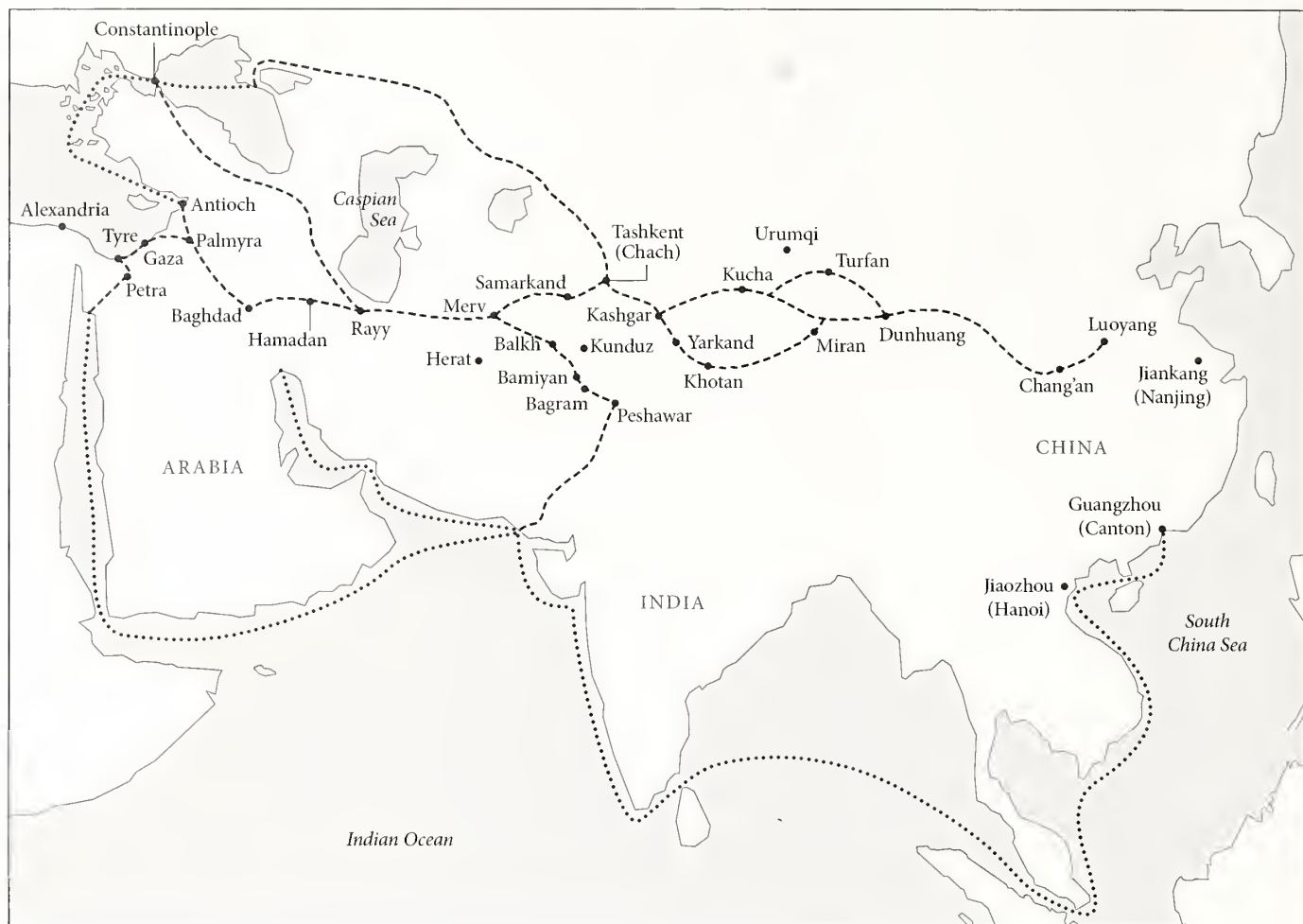
7

7
Pillow, Liao period, tenth century.
Gold and wood, height 10.1 cm,
width 37.8 cm, depth 23.2 cm. Musée
Cernuschi, Paris, MC 2003-6.
Photograph © Philippe Joffre / Musée
Cernuschi / Roger Viollet

understood as a foreign motif. Han-era depictions of the standing *feng huang* show strong similarities to the type that appears in Tang, some Liao, and all Byzantine works of art, indicating that this motif possesses a distinctly Chinese, rather than foreign, origin.

Post-Tang dynasties were greatly influenced by Tang models, and, as noted above, the *feng huang* was one of many motifs imitated in works of art produced under the Liao (Figs. 6 and 7) and Song dynasties.²³ Throughout medieval Chinese history, the *feng huang* appeared on luxury objects in the most prestigious materials, such as silk, gold, and silver. The meaning of the *feng huang* shifted over time, but it was consistently understood as an auspicious and distinguished sign associated with rulers — especially the empress — and the divine recognition of virtuous leadership.²⁴ For instance, the *feng huang* decorates a Liao-era crown found in the tomb of Princess Chen, which dates to circa 1018 (Fig. 6).²⁵

There survives no evidence for the specific pathway of transmission that the *feng huang* followed to Byzantium. Still, given the formal affinity between the Chinese models and Byzantine imitations, it is reasonable to assume that the motif reached Byzantium via a work of medieval Chinese art that found its way to the capital, Constantinople.²⁶ This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the standing *feng huang* does not feature prominently, if at all, in works of Islamic or Central Asian art produced prior to the mid-thirteenth century. Indeed evidence in monumental art for the westward movement of the *feng huang* appears to stop abruptly at the Caves of Dunhuang, an oasis city located in northwest China on the eastern edge of the Taklamakan Desert and the point of convergence for the major western branches of the Silk Road (see Fig. 8). These caves preserve important Tang wall paintings in which the standing *feng huang* is repeatedly depicted, particularly on the clothing of high-status women.²⁷ Given its location at a key juncture along the Silk Road, Dunhuang operated as a point of transition into and out of Chinese culture, which further supports the notion that the *feng huang* was an expressly Chinese motif of limited westward diffusion prior to the thirteenth century.



8

8
Map showing the land and sea commercial pathways connecting Constantinople and Chang'an. Adapted from Françoise Demange, *Glass, Gilding, and Grand Design: Art of Sasanian Iran (224–642)* (New York: Asia Society, 2007)

Chinese historical records allude to diplomatic missions conducted between China and Byzantium, providing one possible means of direct cross-cultural artistic exchange, especially of luxury portable goods. These delegations would have been limited in number, however, with the majority dating to the seventh and eighth centuries, significantly prior to the period during which the Byzantine objects depicting the *feng huang* are thought to have been produced, in the tenth to eleventh centuries.²⁸ Still, Chinese sources record at least one later embassy from Byzantium, dated to 1081 during the Song dynasty, which maintains the possibility of the exchange of works of art as diplomatic gifts in the middle Byzantine era. Additional embassies may have taken place in 1091, with the Song sending a delegation and gifts to the West, although the Chinese sources are unclear as to whether the destination, the land of “Fu-lin,” should be understood as Byzantium or some other medieval polity.²⁹

Another potential means of transference is trade. A brief consideration of the east–west commercial routes in operation during the late antique and medieval eras illustrates the expansive distance separating the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, from the Tang capital, Chang'an (see Fig. 8), but these vast spaces were bridged by vibrant networks connecting far-flung regions. Numerous intermediary cultural and commercial centers punctuated the long journey from Chang'an to Constantinople, providing dynamic markets where people met and goods were exchanged. Of

particular note, mercantile cities such as Samarkand in Sogdiana and Dunhuang (see Fig. 8) offered points of transference.³⁰ In many instances merchants would travel only a segment of the Silk Road, selling their goods at interim depots. Furthermore, the ceremonial, political, and commercial capital of the Islamic Abbasid empire at Baghdad (750–1258) (see Fig. 8) offered a potential way station for imported goods between the far eastern and far western ends of the Silk Road.³¹ In Byzantium, luxury wares, especially textiles, were synonymous with eastern origin such that the early tenth-century Byzantine code for regulating commercial practices in Constantinople, *The Book of the Eparch*, cites a special term for objects, especially silks, coming from the Abbasid empire: “Bagdadikia.”³² In addition, long-distance shipping routes between China, India, and the Mediterranean passed via the Red Sea to the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt beginning in at least the tenth century.³³ Evidence of the impact of these commercial networks is found in Abbasid and Fatimid works of art, especially ceramics that copy Chinese models. Imitations of Tang *sancai* (three-color “splash” ware) and Liao two-color vessels offer important examples of the impact that Chinese ceramics exercised on medieval Islamic production.³⁴ Chinese ceramic vessels were also prized as diplomatic gifts, passing from Chinese to Islamic courts, between Islamic rulers, and from Islamic courts to Byzantium.³⁵

As a result of these active and varied commercial and diplomatic connections among diverse medieval groups, it is entirely possible that individual objects lost their specific cultural associations as they moved from one region to another. This would be especially probable in instances of sporadic and/or mediated cross-cultural communications, such as those that characterize the limited relations between Byzantium and China.³⁶ It is important to note, therefore, that although we today are able to identify the *feng huang* as a medieval Chinese motif, Byzantine viewers were not necessarily cognizant of its specific geographic or cultural origin. They may have identified the *feng huang* with an intermediary group, most likely one of the major commercial cities of the medieval Islamic world, or perhaps some other exotic realm, like India.³⁷ Indeed contacts between Chinese and Islamic courts and markets were more active than those between Byzantium and China.³⁸ For the Byzantines, therefore, the *feng huang* may have been an emphatically foreign motif, but one of generic or ambiguous origin.

It is often assumed that the *feng huang* would have reached Byzantium via textiles, which were lightweight and not prone to breakage, making them well-suited for long-distance travel. Yet no examples of medieval Chinese textiles with Byzantine provenance are attested. In fact, the best-known example of the *feng huang* motif in a Tang-era textile is preserved in a monastery treasury at Shosoin, Japan, and survived only because it was kept in storage and therefore relatively undisturbed from the medieval era to the present (Fig. 3).³⁹ Byzantine importation of

Chinese silks declined after the sixth century, when an independent silk industry in Byzantium began to expand significantly in quantity and quality of production.⁴⁰ By the tenth century, Byzantine silk production was on a par with that of any medieval culture, and the importation of foreign textiles was selective, focusing primarily on Islamic products.

While textiles remain a possible vehicle for the transference of the *feng huang* motif to Byzantium, additional media should be considered. For instance, archaeological evidence dates the impact of Chinese ceramics on Abbasid and Fatimid production to the tenth and eleventh centuries, coinciding with the date range of *feng huang* motifs in Byzantine works of art.⁴¹ Tang-era ceramic ewers showing the *feng huang* on one side (Fig. 1) and a mounted hunter on the other are among the most numerous preserved depictions of the motif, raising the possibility that the *feng huang* might have been circulated via this medium. Other potential vehicles include metalwork, such as mirrors, boxes, and jewelry. Some of the closest medieval Chinese parallels for the *feng huang* on Byzantine portable objects are found in Tang and Liao gold and silver. Many medieval metal vessels are surprisingly light, and metalwork is known to have been transported over great distances in the Middle Ages, arguing in favor of maintaining the possibility of transference via these media.⁴²

A New Approach to Artistic Diffusion

Having surveyed the possible means of transmission, a traditional diffusion study would amass a significant data sample for the appearance of the *feng huang* in Byzantine art and plot the rate and extent of its diffusion over time, seeking to establish at what point the innovation can be said to have saturated the intended audience or market. According to the well-known model devised by Everett Rogers, five levels of progressive degrees of diffusion, each representing a different category of adopters, would be charted: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.⁴³ But several characteristic features of medieval luxury objects make it difficult, if not impossible, to apply this approach.

First, luxury objects are, by definition, exclusive and therefore not necessarily well-positioned to be adopted throughout society. Instead, they are meant to be produced and used at the restricted levels of “innovators” and perhaps to a limited degree among “early adopters.”⁴⁴ Certainly in many cases luxury goods are imitated by the broader population and thereby diffuse throughout society, but as a result, their defining feature of exclusivity is lost. Therefore, it might be argued that the non-material value of luxury objects is measured in part by their lack of saturation: their failure to diffuse is a mark of their success. For this reason, the *feng huang* motif and other instances of cross-cultural, elite-level artistic diffusion require a modified method that accommodates small samples of limited dissemination.

Second, early diffusion models tend to neglect the qualitative distinctions among different instances of adoption. They are primarily concerned with the rates and extent of diffusion, not with the individual decisions that people exercise in determining whether to adopt an innovation. In the analysis of the *feng huang* motif, little if any attention would be paid to the particular contexts of its appearance in the six different Byzantine works of art. As noted above, the more nuanced techniques of network and adoption analysis consider the factors contributing to successful adoptions as well as the reasons behind adoption failure or discontinuation of adoption.⁴⁵ These analytical models are distinguished by their focus on micro-processes of diffusion. They consider qualitative factors, such as different motivations for and types of adoption.⁴⁶

The six middle Byzantine objects that depict the *feng huang* have been the focus of discrete studies that address to varying degrees issues of provenance, stylistic sources, and iconographic programs. In addition, most members of the group are discussed by Etele Kiss in an article of 1999.⁴⁷ Kiss focuses on questions of chronology and stylistic morphology rather than the motivations for the inclusion of the Chinese motif or the qualitative distinctions between different instances of its adoption.

One of the reasons that scholars avoid questions of intention and reception in instances of premodern cross-cultural artistic interaction is the relative dearth of textual evidence explaining why an artist or patron decided to adopt a given motif, or how audiences responded to artistic innovations.⁴⁸ It is no doubt for this reason that diffusionism played an important early role and remains relevant in the study of ornament.⁴⁹ For instance, James Trilling advocates the validity of diffusionism for understanding the spread of decorative motifs throughout various traditions and media of medieval art.⁵⁰ He offers a useful model for navigating the slippery borders between ornament and iconography, between aesthetics and meaning, an approach especially applicable to motifs like the *feng huang*, which did not necessarily preserve their semantic content in tandem with their formal features as they moved across cultural borders. Trilling accommodates a lack of textual evidence about adopters—about the people who decide to use a new motif or form—by analyzing works of art as records of adoption. Similarly, Byzantine objects depicting the *feng huang* can serve as “primary sources” for the intentions behind appropriations of the motif, which can be accessed through visual scrutiny of formal features and careful analysis of a motif’s relation to the artistic programs in which it appears. This approach draws in part on theories of material culture studies that emphasize the “social life of things,” the idea that objects are not passive tools of cultural expression, but instead operate as active agents of social meaning and communication. The receptions and uses they experience as they move among dif-

ferent contexts are equally if not more significant than questions of production and provenance.⁵¹

In revisiting diffusionism, I propose a shift in focus from the mechanics of diffusion over space and time and the effort to link disparate examples of a broadly disseminated motif in semantic terms. Instead I draw attention to micro-processes of adoption in individual instances and argue that while the *feng huang* may convey specific meaning in some of its Byzantine iterations, there is no reason to presume (*pace* Wittkower) that the motif maintained its original significance—or any other single meaning—as it was transmitted.⁵² The multiple and distinct iterations of the *feng huang* together attest to the range of modes within which Byzantine makers and users might operate when deploying foreign motifs. The varied uses of the *feng huang* demonstrate the flexibility and sophistication of Byzantine designers and craftsmen, who negotiated and reworked foreign artistic sources. In line with this interpretation, I emphasize the agency of the adopting culture in the process of artistic exchange, thereby affirming the consensus of art historical discourse that insists on the conscious and active nature of artistic appropriation and expropriation, particularly in instances of cross-cultural interaction.⁵³

The close readings of individual objects employed in this study help to avoid a major pitfall of earlier diffusionist studies, which superficially assess a large data sample and disassociate individual motifs or elements from the objects and programs that constitute their original contexts of depiction. By focusing instead on a limited number of examples, this investigation privileges the changing contexts in which the same motif was situated in order to assess the distinct choices and intentions to which these differences allude.⁵⁴ I characterize the individual iterations of the motif according to both style of execution and, when relevant, potential iconographic content, insisting that while form and meaning can be distinguished from one another, they are not mutually exclusive.⁵⁵

Terms of Analysis

Within this qualitative, small-scale method of analysis, the characterization of different kinds of adoption becomes the primary task. For this endeavor, there exist several useful models. In particular, Richard Ettinghausen provides a taxonomic approach to consideration of the impact of Roman models on Sasanian art, and Marian Feldman offers classifications for the analysis of cross-cultural artistic adoption in diplomatic gifts exchanged in ancient Mesopotamia.⁵⁶ Like the current investigation, their corpora are limited in number, but by focusing on the qualitative aspects of individual instances of artistic diffusion, they maximize the potential significance of the extant evidence. Their terminology, outlined here, offers a



9A

9A

Cup, Byzantine, discovered in Dune on the Island of Gotland, Sweden, tenth or eleventh century. Silver, height 6 cm, diameter at lip 10.6 cm. Historiska Museet, Stockholm, 68495. From Andersson, *Mediaeval Drinking Bowls*, pl. 15A



9B

Detail of 9A. From Andersson, *Mediaeval Drinking Bowls*, pl. 15B

standard vocabulary for the following analysis of the adoption of the *feng huang* motif in Byzantine works of art.

Ettinghausen identifies three primary modes to characterize the way that Greco-Roman artistic models were employed in Sasanian art.⁵⁷ The first mode, “transfer,” is an act of unmediated copying. It involves “taking over of shapes or concepts as they stand, without change or further development.”⁵⁸ The second mode, “adoption,” refers to “artistic forms [that are] transferred from one region to another and remodeled according to novel principles,” which “differ so much from their original configurations that their true identities become obscured.”⁵⁹ As noted above, I define “adoption” in more neutral terms as any act of cross-cultural transmission. Still, I endorse Ettinghausen’s concept, characterizing it as “adaptation” in order to emphasize the active reworking that I understand to be at the core of his definition. He qualifies the third and final mode as “integration,” “a form of interchange, [in which] it is difficult to say which is the giver and which the receiver.”⁶⁰ Feldman identifies a similar dynamic at work in her material, characterizing the phenomenon as a process of hybridization that produced a “supra-regional,” international visual language, in which “specific channels of foreign inspiration cannot be clearly traced.”⁶¹ This category is not applicable within Byzantine uses of the *feng huang*, but does resonate well with other situations of cross-cultural artistic interaction in the premodern world.

For my remaining terms, I shift to Feldman’s identification of an indigenous tradition in which local features are combined with conspicuously foreign elements in a single object with the result that both sources remain distinctly recognizable.⁶² Within this phenomenon, I emphasize the “strategic juxtaposition” of disparate elements, which draws the viewer’s attention to the contrast between indigenous and foreign features. Like Feldman, I note that these contrasts generate meanings that depended on the producer’s ability to control and distinguish between local and foreign forms.⁶³ Such objects resist “integration” of exotic elements in order to maximize the semantic potential of stylistic and cultural alterity.



10A



10B

10A, 10B

Drawing and unrolled view of a cup, Byzantine, discovered in the Kama region of Plehanovo, Russia, tenth or eleventh century. Silver. Current location unknown. From Vladislav Petrovich Darkevich, *Khudozhestvennyi metall Vostoka VIII–XIII* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), pls. 57.1 and 2

Adoption Analysis of the *Feng Huang* in Middle Byzantine Works of Art

Returning to the Byzantine examples of the *feng huang* motif, these different types of adoption can now be exemplified. The first mode is relatively straightforward, and is effectively described by Ettinghausen's term "transfer." A transfer retains the character of its source and shows only the most limited adaptation to the adopting culture's formal and semantic traditions. Three of the six *feng huang* examples adhere exclusively to this description, and two of these objects are silver cups.⁶⁴ One cup was discovered in a fourteenth-century hoard buried in Dune on the island of Gotland, Sweden (Figs. 9A and B).⁶⁵ The specific circumstances surrounding the object's movement from Byzantium to Scandinavia are unknown, but by the ninth century, Scandinavia was connected with Silk Road and Mediterranean commercial routes via the Baltic sea and land and river passages to Constantinople. Trade between Byzantium and Scandinavia was particularly active in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The so-called Varangian guards, Scandinavian mercenaries who served as elite soldiers for the emperor in Constantinople, may also have transferred Byzantine works of art and coins to the North.⁶⁶ The other cup was uncovered in the Kama region of Plehanovo, Russia, but is now lost (Figs. 10A and B).⁶⁷ It may have also traveled from Byzantium along northern trade routes.

Each vessel depicts the *feng huang* in the company of lions, a combination that appears in Tang objects (see Fig. 4). These parallels further strengthen the argument for a direct transfer from a Tang (or Tang-inspired Liao or Song) model. The animals in both Tang and middle Byzantine examples are depicted in comparable environments of floral and vegetal patterns. The cups recall vessels that were produced in the Central Asian region of Sogdiana (and imported to Tang China) as well as those manufactured in China by Sogdian craftsmen who had settled there (Fig. 11).⁶⁸ No evidence suggests, however, that a Byzantine viewer would have been equipped to make such distinctions between Sogdian versus Chinese features and origins. There is no basis on which to read a semantic dimension in these transfers. They instead reflect a desire to imitate a foreign model in a direct fashion so as to capture its aesthetic and perhaps prestige value.

A third example of the *feng huang* has not, to my knowledge, been previously identified. It is found on a lead seal that likely dates to the early tenth century (Fig. 12). Although the material of this object is humble, the seal served to authenticate the documents of a mid-ranking Byzantine courtier, whose name, title, and office are recorded on the reverse: John, imperial *spatharokandidatos* and *dioiketes*.⁶⁹ The motif of the *feng huang* served as a personal emblem of this relatively elite individual and therefore is affiliated with the upper levels of Byzantine artistic production represented by the other five instances of adoption. The *feng huang* is shown in a



11

11
Cup, Tang dynasty, early eighth century. Silver, height 6.4 cm, width 7.8 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase, 1930.51



12

12
Seal of John, imperial *spatharokandidatos* and *dioiketes*, Byzantine, tenth century. Lead, diameter 24 mm, thickness 3 mm. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., 58.106.5350. Photograph © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, D.C.

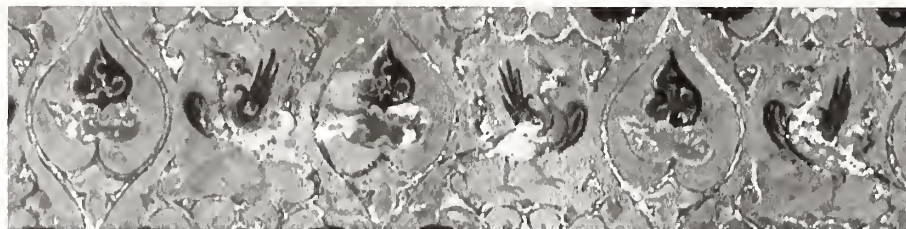
blank field, with no additional iconography to contextualize it. It is best understood as an instance of transfer, although the emblematic nature of the representation suggests that particular value was placed on the motif as a mark of status or possibly propitiousness.

A fourth *feng huang* motif is found in a mid-tenth-century copy of a Byzantine secular manuscript on horse care, the *Hippiatrica* (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Phillips 1538, fol. 41r).⁷⁰ In one headpiece are depicted *feng huang* birds standing on palmette leaves (Figs. 13A and B). At either side, additional birds, possibly pheasants, are interspersed in the tendrils. Headpieces in other folios of the manuscript depict fantastic animals, such as griffins, encircled by abstract vegetal rinceaux (fol. 29r). The text was compiled in the imperial scriptorium during the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 945–59) from earlier works by Roman and Byzantine authors.⁷¹ The manuscript is an extremely luxurious object. Measuring 26.5 by 29.6 centimeters and consisting of 394 folia, its size and extent are unusually substantial. It boasts high-quality parchment, elegant calligraphy, sumptuous headpieces, and intricate border ornaments. Many of the decorations are elaborated with gold leaf.

The use of the *feng huang* in the headpiece might at first be interpreted as a simple transfer, yet several important features point to a different dynamic. It illustrates an instance of adaptation, albeit at a low level. The individual motifs, including the *feng huang*, but also the vegetal and floral elements, are recognizably Chinese in origin. It is possible that the artist was working from a textile model (for example, Fig. 3), which would have approximated the carpet design in the manuscript. Both textile and manuscript possess a two-dimensional format and an all-over distribution of repeating motifs. At the same time, and unlike the silver cups, the manuscript page adapts the *feng huang* to a new medium and composition even though stylistically it remains close to a Chinese model.



13A



13B

13A

Headpiece, Byzantine, tenth century. Pigment and gold foil on parchment, folio 26.5 x 29.6 cm. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Cod. Phillips 1538, fol. 41r. Photograph courtesy of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

13B

Detail of 13A. Photograph courtesy of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

The context of its depiction, a decorative border in a book on horse care, raises the question of the motivation for the selection of a foreign motif to adorn this particular object. The *feng huang* might have been considered appropriate for this handbook because of its association with the animal world, or perhaps its exotic character was thought to resonate with the secular information found in the manuscript.⁷² Indeed, sections of the *Hippiatrica* address the use of pharmaceuticals in horse care, and these medicines often employed spices, such as cinnamon, ginger, and pepper, that came from exotic regions of the East.⁷³ It is, of course, also possible that the motifs were generic decorative forms intended to convey luxury and status in a broad sense.

While the interpretation of any specific meaning for the *feng huang*'s inclusion in the manuscript headpiece remains hypothetical, the object was certainly associated with the highest level of patronage, that of the imperial circle.⁷⁴ Like other encyclopedic handbooks produced under the auspices of Constantine VII, the *Hippiatrica* was most likely intended for minimal circulation within a limited audience.⁷⁵ These conditions would have undermined the potential diffusion of the motif throughout Byzantine society.

Examples of transfer and low-level adaptation can be easily mistaken as the sole modes of cross-cultural interaction, particularly with regards to motifs that appear merely ornamental and situations in which little textual or historical evidence is available to explain the intentions behind a given adoption. But examples such as these supply important evidence for the broader phenomena of artistic contacts and help to highlight distinguishing features of more nuanced and semantically informed modes of appropriation and expropriation.

A fifth example of the *feng huang*, found on the reverse of a tenth- or eleventh-century Byzantine ivory triptych (Figs. 14A and B), represents a much more thorough instance of adaptation that operates on multiple levels and might even be



14A

14A

Back side and outer wings of a triptych, Byzantine (Constantinople), tenth or eleventh century. Ivory, height 25.2 cm, width 33 cm (open). Museo Sacro della Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican City, 2441. Photograph © Collection of the Museo Sacro of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana



14B

Detail of 14A. Photograph © Collection of the Museo Sacro of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

said to gesture toward integration. Several birds in the medallions follow a Chinese model, including the one located in the second row from the top on the right (Fig. 14B). As in the *Hippiatrica* headpiece, the birds on the ivory panel are disassociated from their original source, but here the reworking of floral, foliate, and bird motifs is more extensive.⁷⁶ The tendril frames resemble late antique and Byzantine models, indicating assimilation of the *feng huang* within a Byzantine stylistic and compositional idiom.⁷⁷ Although the alterity of the bird is still evident, it has shed some of its original formal distinctions, showing progression toward stylistic integration. This transformation is not, however, limited to formal aspects. The bird is more than an ornamental motif; it participates in a decidedly symbolic program, dictated by the large, jeweled cross at the center.⁷⁸ While the silver cups, lead seal, and manuscript headpiece belong to the domain of secular art, the triptych is a Christian devotional object. The cross represents a sign of spiritual redemption in an otherworldly setting. The panoply of well-ordered exotic birds and floral motifs evokes the garden of paradise. Although the *feng huang* has lost some of the stylistic distinctions of the Chinese model, its exotic character is still discernible and desirable. Allusion to the animal's distant origin may have been intended to express the wondrous diversity of the heavenly realm and its miraculous encompassing of the earth's natural bounty, which includes animals from the farthest reaches of the earth.⁷⁹ Here the foreign motif serves a distinctly Christian program. As such, it has been appropriated and adapted formally, but expropriated semantically from its Chinese model.

The sixth and final example of adoption is the most complex of all. A late tenth- or eleventh-century middle Byzantine purple-dyed ivory casket depicts two *feng*



15A

15A

Casket, Byzantine (Constantinople), tenth or eleventh century. Dyed ivory, height 13.4 cm, width 26.4 cm, depth 13 cm. Cathedral Treasury, Troyes, France. © Trésor de la cathédrale de Troyes – Photograph Didier Vogel

huang birds, each positioned on one short end of the box (Figs. 15A and B).⁸⁰ The birds closely resemble medieval Chinese models, observing the distinctive characteristics of the standing *feng huang* type. But while the precisely rendered birds are best characterized as stylistic transfers, the context of their depiction on the box suggests that a different semantic dynamic is at work. The front and back panels of the casket depict the royal hunt and the lid displays a scene of imperial *adventus*, or triumphal return to the capital city. These emphatically militaristic and victorious themes have prompted the suggestion that the Chinese bird operates here like a late antique Roman–Byzantine phoenix, which, as noted above, was understood as a mythical animal of eastern origin that symbolized imperial renewal and political succession.⁸¹ Yet the Chinese *feng huang* does not resemble the Roman–Byzantine phoenix in appearance, casting doubt on the notion that a Byzantine viewer would have equated the two birds (compare Figs. 2 and 15B). If the designer of the Troyes Casket intended to emphasize continuity with the late antique iconographic motif and its meaning, presumably he would have used the familiar Roman–Byzantine form. An argument for semantic domestication of the *feng huang* does not sufficiently account for the stylistic alterity that the motif maintains in the Troyes Casket. The decision to employ the decidedly exotic *feng huang* implies a different set of intentions and meanings.

Its expressly foreign character contrasts with other motifs on the ivory box, further preventing a viewer from reading the bird as a Byzantine phoenix. The formal contrast between the bird and the vignettes of hunt and triumph emphasizes cultural and geographic distance, perhaps in order to demonstrate that the dominion exercised by the imperial figures in the long panels extends to the farthest corners of the earth, encompassing the most exotic creatures of the natural world and the distant cultures they represent. The Chinese bird participates in a Byzantine semantic system, but not as a result of stylistic integration or semantic expropriation. Instead its meaning relies on the marshaling of stylistic alterity as a signifier in and of itself. The aesthetic friction generated by the strategic juxtaposition of styles in the long and short panels was essential to the object's message of cultural difference and military conquest.



15B

15B

End panel of figure 15a. © Trésor de la cathédrale de Troyes – Photograph Didier Vogel

Like the *Hippiatrica* headpiece, the Troyes Casket was a luxury object produced for imperial, or at least courtly, consumption. It would have likely circulated in a limited fashion, at the highest social levels. Similarly, the silver cups and ivory triptych would have been restricted in their production and subsequent social circulation because of the valuable materials from which they were fabricated.⁸² Yet, like the lead seal, the non-imperial nature of the cups and triptych as well as their practical functions might have predisposed them to be more easily disseminated than the manuscript or casket.

In addition to the economic and social proscriptions that the patronage and media of these objects imply, the foreign character of the *feng huang* motif might also have proved an obstacle to its broader cultural diffusion. These examples suggest that the more deeply the motif was absorbed into the program of a given work of art, the more extensively it was assimilated to Byzantine stylistic norms. The triptych and manuscript headpiece both show signs of this process, indicating the initial stages of the erasure of alterity.⁸³ In the end, the emphatic cultural otherness, and the meanings that Byzantine viewers drew from this difference, might have prevented the *feng huang* from more extensive dissemination.⁸⁴

Conclusions

These six works of art represent qualitatively different types of Byzantine adoption of a Chinese model. My interpretation emphasizes the agency of the Byzantine makers and users of these objects, who chose to appropriate foreign types to serve Byzantine interests and needs. The simplest of these modes was that of transfer, whereby medieval Chinese sources were imitated directly and little stylistic or semantic transformation of the models took place. But we should not see this dynamic as necessarily earlier or less sophisticated than the others, nor should we take stylistic transfer as indicative of a less complex cognitive or semantic appropriation of a given model. Indeed the ivory casket shows an equally if not more direct transfer of a medieval Chinese stylistic type, but is the most subtle of the six examples in terms of the message the *feng huang* is marshaled to convey through strategic juxtaposition. These objects do not necessarily demonstrate a process of

evolution from one dynamic of adoption to the next. Behind each choice lie the aesthetic and ideological needs of the artist and patron as well as their abilities, both artistic and cognitive. Any one of these modes — transfer, adaptation, integration, or strategic juxtaposition — could be deployed at a given time. Indeed, as demonstrated by the Troyes Casket, more than one of these dynamics could be at work in a single object.

This case study of the Byzantine adoption of the *feng huang* motif demonstrates the usefulness of returning to diffusion — via network analysis — in order to explore more deeply and systematically the transmission of artistic forms and meanings in the premodern era and in the cross-cultural context. A focus on the rate and extent of the adoption of the *feng huang* in Byzantium is unlikely to yield particularly informative conclusions because of the exclusive nature and limited production of the medieval luxury objects on which the motif appeared. But aspects of network analysis that assist in discerning qualitative distinctions among instances of adoption do offer useful perspective on this material. Careful scrutiny of the differences between the individual iterations of the *feng huang* reveals the flexibility of Byzantine makers and users in their deployment of this foreign model. A method that insists on qualitative distinctions among instances of adoption and is generated from the close reading of individual objects brings to light the sophisticated nature of Byzantine cross-cultural appropriation and expropriation. In this way it offers perspective that can be applied productively to similar instances of small-scale but complex adoption in other situations of premodern cross-cultural artistic transmission.

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NOTES

This article develops an excerpt from my doctoral dissertation, "Exotic Elements in Middle Byzantine Secular Art and Aesthetics, 843–1204 CE" (Harvard University, 2004). A version of this essay was presented at the College Art Association 2008 session "Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction among the Ancient and Early Medieval Mediterranean, Near East, and Asia," organized by Matthew P. Canepa. I thank the chair, participants, and audience of that session for their helpful suggestions. I am also indebted to Eva Hoffman, Emine Fetvacı, Amy Gansell, Dilyana Angelova, Meredith Malone, and especially Heather Grossman for their comments and encouragement. Special thanks are due to the two anonymous readers commissioned by *Ars Orientalis*, who provided careful and valuable contributions for the improvement of this essay. I am grateful to Hao Sheng, Karen Hwang, and Li Ling for assistance with the translation of Chinese texts. Illustration expenses were generously subsidized by a Junior Faculty Research Grant from the College of Arts and Sciences, Washington University in St. Louis.

- 1 The primary alternative theory for parallelisms in cultural developments was that of "independent" or "spontaneous" convergence of artistic styles, motifs, and meanings. For a brief discussion of these two approaches and their debate in the early twentieth century, see Rudolf Wittkower, "East and West: The Problem of Cultural Exchange" (1966); repr. in *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977), 10–14. For a general introduction to the origins and later developments of diffusionism, see Peter J. Hugill, "Diffusionism," in *The Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, ed. David Levinson and Melvin Ember, 4 vols. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1996), 1:343–45; and idem, "Introduction," in *The Transfer and*

Transformation of Ideas and Material Culture, ed. Peter J. Hugill and D. Bruce Dickson (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1988), ix–xxii.

- 2 For useful introductions to current models for diffusion analysis, see Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (1962; 5th ed., New York: The Free Press, 2003), esp. 1–37; and Thomas W. Valente, *Network Models of the Diffusion of Innovations* (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 1995), esp. 2–5.
- 3 Exceptions can be found in archaeological and anthropological studies of large-scale distribution phenomena. For example, see Dave D. Davis, "Investigating the Diffusion of Stylistic Innovations," in *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*, vol. 6, ed. Michael B. Schiffer (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 53–89. Also see the essays collected in Hugill and Dickson, *The Transfer and Transformation of Ideas*.
- 4 Rudolf Wittkower, "The Eagle and Serpent: A Study in the Migration of Symbols," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 4 (1939): 293–35; repr. in *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols*, 15–44. Another prominent example of the diffusionist approach in art history is Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (Berlin, 1893), translated by Evelyn Kain as *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- 5 In the field of premodern and non-Western art history, see especially John Boardman, *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); Robert Ousterhout and D. Fairchild Ruggles, eds., *Encounters with Islam*, special issue of *Gesta* 43, no. 2 (2004); Alka Patel, ed., *Communities and Commodities: Western India and the Indian Ocean (11th–15th Centuries)*, special issue of *Ars Orientalis* 34 (2004); Prudence O.

- Harper, *In Search of a Cultural Identity: Monuments and Artifacts of the Sasanian Near East 3rd to 7th Century A.D.* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2006), esp. ch. 3, "Diffusion," 115–62; Philippe Forêt and Andreas Kaplony, eds., *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); and Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- 6 See Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 1–37; and Valente, *Network Models*, 2–5; and esp. Barbara Wejnert, "Integrating Models of Diffusion of Innovations: A Conceptual Framework," *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 292–326.
 - 7 The study of exotica in middle Byzantine culture and art has received relatively limited attention. For the seminal study on this topic, see André Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens," *München Jahrbuch der bildenden kunst* 2 (1951): 265–90. Also see Walker, "Exotic Elements in Middle Byzantine Secular Art," with a comprehensive bibliography; and eadem, "Meaningful Mingling: Classicizing Imagery and Islamicizing Script in a Byzantine Bowl," *Art Bulletin* (2008) 90, no. 1: 32–53.
 - 8 In this respect, I take as a departure point Eva Hoffman's call to move discussion of medieval cross-cultural artistic interaction away from questions of origin and provenance and toward consideration of objects' post-production transference through different cultural contexts, their dialogue with multiple artistic traditions, and the implications portability holds for the meaning of works of art. See Eva Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 17–50; and Alicia Walker, "Cross-Cultural Reception in the Absence of Texts: The Islamic Appropriation of a Middle Byzantine Rosette Casket," *Gesta* 47, no. 2 (2008): 99–122.
 - 9 For extensive discussion of the form and meaning of phoenix iconography in Roman–Byzantine art, see R. van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix according to Classical and Early Christian Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).
 - 10 In Chinese visual and literary tradition, two other mythical birds, the *zhu niao* (or Vermilion [Red] Bird) and the *huan* (typically referred to as a "senmurv"), were depicted following the same conventions as the *feng huang*. Indeed the birds may have been graphically interchangeable. For a brief introduction to these animals, see Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon* (London: British Museum Publications, 1984), 99–105. Regarding the *zhu niao* and its significance in medieval Chinese culture, see Edward H. Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird: T'ang Images of the South* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). For the *huan* and its relationship to the *feng huang*, see James Hargett, "Playing Second Fiddle: The *Luan*-Bird in Early and Medieval Chinese Literature," *T'oung Pao* 75, nos. 4–5 (1989): 235–62.
 - 11 Concerning the more extensive dissemination of Chinese cultural forms—including the *feng huang*—to the west after the mid-thirteenth century and the role of the Mongol empire in facilitating these transmissions, see Ladan Akbarnia, "*Khita'i*: Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom in Iran and Central Asia" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2007); and Dickran Kouymjian, "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth-Century Armenia: Political and Cultural Exchange along the Silk Road," in *The Journey of Maps*, 97–117, both with additional bibliography.
 - 12 For discussion of "cognitive geography" and its role in the formation of ancient and late antique Roman attitudes toward India and luxury commodities from the East, see Grant Parker, "Ex Oriente Luxuria: Indian Commodities and Roman Experience," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45, no. 1 (2002): 40–95, esp. 41, 44, and 55–61.
 - 13 My discussion is particularly informed by Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*; idem with F. Flory Shoemaker, *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (1962; 2nd ed., New York: The Free Press, 1971); and Valente, *Network Models*.
 - 14 Regarding the application of the term "expropriation" to analysis of medieval cross-cultural artistic interaction and the distinction of "expropriation" from "appropriation," see Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability," 30.
 - 15 The terms appropriation and expropriation—with their emphasis on the potentially transformative nature of adoption—resonate with the concept of "re-invention" found in revisions to traditional diffusion theory. Re-invention accounts for the way in "which an innovation is changed or modified by a user in the process of its adoption and implementation.... an innovation is not necessarily invariant during the process of its diffusion. And adopting an innovation is not necessarily a passive role of just implementing a standard template of the new idea." Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 16–17.
 - 16 After the mid-eleventh century in both Chinese and foreign works of art, the *feng huang* is typically rendered flying, rather than standing. See James C.Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 149, cat. no. 39; 151–53, cat. nos. 40–42; 163, cat. no. 47; and 197, cat. no. 60. For the flying *feng huang* in Chinese works of art prior to the thirteenth century, see *ibid.*,

- 55, fig. 12; 87–90, cat. no. 23 and fig. 32; and 118–121, cat. nos. 31–32.
- 17 Hargett, “Playing Second Fiddle,” 236.
- 18 Regarding the meaning of the *feng huang* in pre-Tang art and culture and its preeminence in Chinese bird lore, see Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), passim; and Hargett, “Playing Second Fiddle,” passim.
- 19 For depictions of the *feng huang* in Tang funerary decorations, see Fanfeng Meng and Zhaoying Liu, eds., *Xin Zhongguo chu tu mu zhi* [Excavated epitaphs from New China: Hebei], vol. 1 (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 2004), passim. Also see Rawson, *Chinese Ornament*, 73, fig. 53; and Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, eds., *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China, Gansu and Ningxia, 4th–7th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams and Asia Society, 2001), 44, fig. B; 77–78, no. 16a (identified as the *zhu niao*); 246–49, no. 80a and fig. B (identified as the *zhu niao*).
- 20 On the receptiveness of medieval Chinese, especially Tang, society to cross-cultural interaction, see Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of Tang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963); and Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, “Cosmopolitanism and the Tang,” in Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 292–303.
- 21 Tang-era metalwork vessels showing the *feng huang* against an open field follow western compositional models, possibly from Sasanian Persia: Jessica Rawson, “The Lotus and the Dragon: Sources of Chinese Ornament,” *Orientalism* 15, no. 11 (1984): 22–36, esp. 27. In contrast, the traditional Chinese representation of the *feng huang* typically shows the animal surrounded by foliage.
- 22 Rawson, “The Lotus and the Dragon,” 25–27; and eadem, *The Ornament on Chinese Silver of the Tang Dynasty* (AD 618–906), British Museum Occasional Papers 40 (London: British Museum, 1982), esp. 6–7.
- 23 For Liao depictions of the *feng huang*, see Tianshu Zhu, *Liao dai jin yin qi* [Liao dynasty gold and silver objects] (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1998), passim; and Hélène Chollet, “Treasures from the Liao Period at the Musée Cernuschi,” *Orientalism* 36, no. 5 (2005): 40–46. In Liao objects, the *feng huang* is more commonly rendered in flight, but parallels for the standing *feng huang* (the type that appears in Byzantine art) are also attested. For the *feng huang* in flight, see Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, 87–90, cat. no. 23 and fig. 32; for the standing *feng huang*, see *ibid.*, 176–77, cat. no. 51; Hsueh-man Shen, *Gilded Splendor: Treasures of China’s Liao Empire (907–1125)* (New York: Asia Society, 2006), cat. nos. 3 and 16; and Monique Crick and Helen Loveday, *L’Or des steppes: Arts somptuaires de la dynastie Liao (907–1125)* (Geneva: Collections Baur, 2007), cat. nos. 4, 14, 16, 37, 39, and 51. A limited number of objects depicting the *feng huang* may be dated to the twelfth century, during the Song era. But these iterations typically show the bird in flight and do not provide as striking a parallel to the standing *feng huang* that appears in Byzantine works of art. See Michael Rogers, “China and Islam — The Archaeological Evidence of the Mashriq,” in *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, ed. D. S. Richards (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970), 67–80, esp. 71–73; and Ryoichi Hayashi, *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill and Heibonsha, 1975), 151, fig. 174.
- 24 Hargett, “Playing Second Fiddle,” 236.
- 25 Shen, *Gilded Splendor*, 102–103.
- 26 The depiction of the *feng huang* in Chinese objects of valuable materials and high-quality craftsmanship would have made evident its prestige even if no explanatory information traveled with the object to Byzantium. A hypothesis that Byzantine artists and patrons may have adopted the *feng huang* because of its associations with social status and material wealth, even if they were not aware of its specific origins and meaning, finds support in diffusion and network studies which establish that innovations spread most effectively “via structural equivalence [which] is the imitation of the behavior of others who are in a similar position in the social space, but not necessarily others with whom the potential adopter communicates” directly: Valente, *Network Models*, 14–15.
- 27 The prevalence of *feng huang* motifs in the textile patterns depicted in medieval Chinese frescoes from Dunhuang, particularly those worn by empresses and female members of the imperial court, signals the elite status of the motif and its frequent association with women: Shana Chang, *Tun-huang li tai fu shih t’u an* [Costume patterns from Dunhuang frescoes (A.D. 366–1368)] (Hsiankang: Wan li shu-tien, 1986), figs. 17–18, 75, 78, 177–78, and 278. It should be noted, however, that some of the women depicted in the Dunhuang murals originated from territories further west. For example, in a late tenth-century mural, the daughter of the king of Khotan, a Silk Road city west of Dunhuang, along the southwestern edge of the Taklamakan Desert (see Fig. 8), is depicted wearing an elaborate *feng huang* headdress adorned with jade, a material for which Khotan was famous. It is unclear whether the *feng huang* was part of the Khotan visual vocabulary, or whether the headdress represents a syncretic object combining Chinese and Central Asian modes. See Roderick Whitfield, Susan Whitfield, and Neville Agnew, *Cave Temples of Mogao*:

Art and History on the Silk Road (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute and the J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000), 28. For further discussion of the topography and early medieval history of this segment of the Silk Road, see Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, "Introduction: Monks, Merchants, and Nomads in Northwest China," in Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 15–36.

- 28 For useful discussion of the mechanics of trade along the Silk Road in the early Byzantine period, see Jonathan Karam Skaff, "The Sogdian Trade Diaspora in East Turkestan during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 46, no. 4 (2003): 475–524. The presence of Roman motifs in works of art dating to the Han dynasty evinces artistic transmission between these groups. But while, hypothetically speaking, the products of these contacts could have been passed down to the Byzantine court, no objects or historical references attesting to such intracultural dissemination exist. It is more likely that middle Byzantine use of the *feng huang* is the result of contemporaneous interactions, roughly from the ninth to the eleventh century. On Roman–Han cultural and artistic connections, see Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, "Pour une archéologie des échanges: Apports étrangers en Chine — transmission, réception, assimilation," *Arts Asiatique* 49 (1994): 21–33; Donald Leslie and Kenneth Gardiner, *The Roman Empire in Chinese Sources* (Rome: Bardi, 1996), with an important review by Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "The Roman Empire as Known to Han China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119, no. 1 (1999): 71–79; and Anthony J. Barbieri-Low, "Roman Themes in a Group of Eastern Han Lacquer Vessels," *Oriental Art* 32, no. 5 (2001): 52–58.

- 29 Friedrich Hirth, "The Mystery of Fu-lin," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 30, no. 1 (1909): 1–31, esp. 24–31; and idem, "The Mystery of Fu-lin (cont.)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 33 (1913): 193–208 (which argues that Fu-lin is the Byzantine empire); and Robert Hartwell, *Tribute Missions to China, 960–1126* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1983), 72 (which proposes that Fu-lin should be identified as the Seljuk empire). Regarding Chinese–Byzantine relations, also see D. W. Johnson and Alexander Kazhdan, "China," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1:422; Michael Kordosis, *China and the Greek World: An Introduction to Greek–Chinese Studies with Special Reference to the Chinese Sources*, vol. 1, *Hellenistic — Roman — Early Byzantine Period (2nd c. BC–6th c. AD)* (Thessalonike: n.p., 1992); Baoquan Han, "Chang'an: China's Ancient Capital and Gateway to the Silk Road," in *Gateway to the Silk Road: Relics from the Han to the Tang Dynasties from Xi'an, China*, ed. Herbert Coultts (Edinburgh: City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries, 1996), 15–23, esp. 17; and Ying Lin, *Tang dai Fulin cong shuo (Fulin the Ruler of Treasure Country: Byzantium in the Tang Society AD 618–907)* (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2006).
- 30 Regarding the Sogdians, their art, and their important role in early medieval commerce along the Silk Road, see Guitty Azarpay, *Sogdian Painting: The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); and Judith A. Lerner, "The Merchant Empire of the Sogdians"; Boris I. Marshak, "The Sogdians in Their Homeland"; and Luo Feng, "Sogdians in Northwest China," in Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, 220–69.
- 31 For a summary of archeological evidence for trade connections between the

Abbasid empire and Tang China, see A. D. H. Bivar, "Trade between China and the Near East in the Sasanian and Early Muslim Periods," in *Pottery and Metalwork in T'ang China: Their Chronology and External Relations*, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, no. 1, ed. William Watson (London: University of London, 1976), 1–11. Another possible means for the transference of works of art and artistic traditions was via Chinese artists active at the eighth-century Abbasid court: see Paul Pelliot, "Des Artisans Chinois à la Capitale Abbasside en 751–762," *T'oung Pao* 26 (1969): 110–12. Regarding Chinese artists at the tenth-century Samanid court, see Julian Raby, "Between Sogdia and the Mamluks: A Note on the Earliest Illustrations to Kalila wa Dimna," *Oriental Art*, n.s., 33, no. 34 (1987/88): 381–98, esp. 386 and 397 n. 27.

32 It is interesting to note that members of the Byzantine court were allowed privileged access to these imported goods and could purchase quantities for their personal use directly from the commercial distributors: *To Eparxikon Vivlion. The Book of the Eparch. Le livre du préfet*, intro. Ivan Dujčev (London: Variorum Reprints, 1970), 29–30 and 239–40.

33 Abraham L. Udovitch, "Fatimid Cairo: Crossroads of World Trade — From Spain to India," in *L'Égypte Fatimide: son art et son histoire*, ed. Marianne Barrucand (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999), 681–91.

34 See Basil Gray, "The Export of Chinese Porcelain to the Islamic World: Some Reflections on Its Significance for Islamic Art, before 1400," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 41 (1975–76/1976–77): 231–61, esp. 231–33; and Yolande Crow, "Early Islamic Pottery and China," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 41 (1975–76/1976–77): 263–78, esp. 270–71. For trade between

- China and Egypt in the ninth to eleventh centuries during the Tulunid and Fatimid dynasties — providing evidence of Tang, Liao, and Northern Song wares in medieval Fustat — see George T. Scanlon, “Egypt and China: Trade and Imitation,” in *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, ed. D. S. Richards (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970), 81–95, esp. 81–88.
- 35 Crowe, “Early Islamic Pottery and China,” 263–64. The eleventh-century Fatimid courtier, Ibn al-Zubayr, reported that “Chinese porcelain dishes,” were among the gifts sent from the Seljuk ruler Tughrilbek to the Byzantine emperor in 1057: Ahmad ibn al-Rashid Ibn al-Zubayr, *The Book of Gifts and Rarities*, trans. Ghada-al-Hijawi al-Qaddumi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 112. Regarding the exchange of diplomatic gifts between Byzantine and medieval Islamic potentates, see Anthony Cutler, “Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 247–78, with additional bibliography.
- 36 In contrast, Armenian objects employing the *feng huang* were produced during a period when Armenia maintained direct and regular contact with the Mongol court, which supports an argument for retention of Chinese meanings for the motif in the Armenian context: Kouymjian, “The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth-Century Armenia,” 121–29.
- 37 Similarly, Roman and late antique conceptions of India and China were often imprecise. Consumers of exotic trade goods and even geographers were sometimes misinformed regarding the specific origins of commodities and objects. On this point, see Philip Mayerson, “A Confusion of Indias: Asian India and African India in the Byzantine Sources,” *Journal of the Oriental Society* 113, no. 2 (1993): 169–74; and Parker, “*Ex Oriente Luxuria*,” passim. Incorrect identifications of the sources for commercial goods could also be intentional. Thirteenth-century Islamic merchants misrepresented the origins of trade items in dealings with Chinese buyers, perhaps to prevent their clients from accessing these exotic wares and commodities directly: G. R. Hudson, “The Medieval Trade of China,” in *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, ed. D. S. Richards (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970), 159–67, esp. 160–61; and *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, ed. and trans. Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1966).
- 38 According to Chinese sources, thirty-six Islamic missions went to the Tang capital Chang’an between 651 and 798, an average of four per year: Han, “Chang’an: China’s Ancient Capital and Gateway to the Silk Road,” 17–18.
- 39 Hayashi, *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in*, 108–109, fig. 118. An additional example of a medieval Chinese textile depicting the *feng huang* was excavated at Reshui, Dulan, Qinghai Province and dates to the eighth or ninth century: James C. Y. Watt, et al., *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–150 AD* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 75, fig. 74.
- 40 The old tale, recounted by early Byzantine historians, that the growth in the Byzantine silk industry was spurred by the smuggling of silkworms from China to Byzantium is suspect, but continues to be cited broadly. For a more rigorous investigation of the growth of Byzantium’s silk industry and its cross-cultural dimensions, see David Jacoby, “Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 197–240, esp. 198–99.
- 41 Gray, “The Export of Chinese Porcelain to the Islamic World,” 233.
- 42 Regarding the trade in metalwork between Egypt and India in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, especially in copper and bronze vessels, see Udovitch, “Fatimid Cairo: Crossroads of World Trade,” 689–91.
- 43 Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 247–51.
- 44 Rogers characterizes “innovators” (the most relevant category for the Byzantine adoption of the *feng huang*) as “cosmopolites” whose “control of substantial financial resources to absorb the possible loss owing to an unprofitable innovation” allows them to take risks. They possess the ability to “cope with the high degree of uncertainty about an innovation at the time that the innovator adopts” and they are capable of “launching the new idea in the social system by importing the innovation from outside of the system’s boundary.” In contrast, “early adopters” are more integral to society and serve as role models for mass-scale adoption of an innovation: “The early adopter is respected by his or her peers, and is the embodiment of successful and discrete use of new ideas.... the role of the early adopter is to decrease uncertainty about a new idea by adopting it, and then conveying a subjective evaluation of the innovation to near-peers by means of interpersonal networks.” Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 248–49.
- 45 Valente, *Network Models*, 12–13. Also see Wejnert, “Integrating Models of Diffusion of Innovations,” 297–326, which argues for the need to adapt diffusion analysis so as to account for the complex and interactive variables that influence decisions to adopt innovations.
- 46 Rogers identifies the main “characteristics of innovations” that potential adopters consider as: relative advantage (“the degree to which an innovation is

- perceived as better than the idea it supersedes"); compatibility ("the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters"); complexity ("the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use"); trialability ("the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis"); and observability ("the degree to which the results of an innovation are observable to others"). Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 15–16.
- 47 Etele Kiss, "Byzantine Silversmiths' Work around 1000 between China and the Ottonians: The Besztérec Holy Water Vessel," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): 301–14.
- 48 For further discussion of this issue, see Walker, "In the Absence of Texts."
- 49 As seen, for example, in Riegl's seminal study of the diffusion of ornament, *Stilfragen*.
- 50 James Trilling, "Medieval Interlace Ornament: The Making of a Cross-Cultural Idiom," *Arte Medievale* 9, no. 1 (1995): 51–86; and idem, *The Language of Ornament* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001).
- 51 See Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, "The Cultural Biography of Objects," *World Archaeology* 31, no. 2 (1999): 169–78; and Robin Osborne and Jeremy Tanner, eds., *Art's Agency and Art History* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).
- 52 Wittkower observes that the question of meaning is key to discussions of what he called "fine" or "high" arts, because they are more likely to be invested with cultural significance and, I would add, with more individual and even unique meanings (Wittkower, "East and West: The Problem of Cultural Exchange," 13). I disagree, however, regarding the basis of his distinction. He categorizes objects according to materials: "artisan media" such as "ceramics, metalwork, and textiles" are to him fundamentally different from "high art" such as "painting and sculpture." For the medieval era, when many of the most aesthetically sophisticated and conceptually complex objects were produced in so-called craft materials—ivory, metal, textile—his distinctions do not hold.
- 53 On this point, see Irene Winter, "Perspective on the 'Local Style' of Hasanlu IVB: A Study in Receptivity," in *Mountains and Lowlands: Essays in the Archaeology of Greater Mesopotamia*, ed. Louis D. Levine and T. Cuyler Young, Jr. (Malibu: Udena Publications, 1977), 371–86; Linda Seidel, "Images of the Crusades in Western Art: Models as Metaphors," in *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades*, ed. Vladimir P. Goss (Kalama-zoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 377–91; Robert Nelson, "Appropriation," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert Nelson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 116–28, with additional bibliography; and John Hay, "Toward a Theory of the Intercultural," *Res* 35 (1999): 5–9.
- 54 Hoffman similarly emphasizes the potential for motifs of consistent form and style to express different meanings within separate objects and distinct artistic traditions: Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability," 17–50.
- 55 Or, to put it another way, style can function iconographically. On this point, see Irene Winter, "The Affective Properties of Styles: An Inquiry into Analytical Process and the Inscription of Meaning in Art History," in *Picturing Science* *Producing Art*, ed. Caroline A. Jones and Peter Galison (New York: Routledge, 1998), 55–77. For a useful study of the deployment of style in the expression of political identity and social difference, see Esther Pasztory, "Identity and Difference: The Uses and Meanings of Ethnic Styles," *Studies in the History of Art* 27 (1989): 15–38.
- 56 Richard Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic World: Three Modes of Artistic Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Marian Feldman, "Luxurious Forms: Redefining a Mediterranean 'International Style,' 1400–1200 BCE," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 1 (March 2002): 6–29; and eadem, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400–1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Also see Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, "Pour une archéologie des échanges," esp. 23–26; Esther Jacobson, "Beyond the Frontier. A Reconsideration of Cultural Interchange between China and the Early Nomads," *Early China* 13 (1988): 201–40; and Anthony Cutler, "Byzantine Art and the North: Meditations on the Notion of Influence," (1996); repr. in *Byzantium, Italy and the North: Papers on Cultural Relations* (London: Pindar Press, 2000), 455–73.
- 57 Ettinghausen describes his study as concerned with "reception" or "transformation." I subsume both these terms in "appropriation," which I believe entails the concepts of receptivity and agency that Ettinghausen intends: Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran*, 1–2.
- 58 Ettinghausen identifies these types of adoption as rare and short-lived, presumably because they imply that form and meaning were not rooted in the receiving culture's traditions and were therefore less likely to be preserved: Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran*, 1.

- 59 Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran*, 2.
- 60 He notes that integration often takes place in an “off-beat, marginal region” and might result in “secondary or unusual features that suddenly took on a new significance in their new historical setting.” Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran*, 2.
- 61 She proposes the term “hybridized international tradition” to characterize objects that defy a single cultural affiliation. The origins of particular motifs and styles become obscure because multiple cultures deploy a common artistic vocabulary or “visual koine” (Feldman, “Luxurious Forms,” 8–9, 17–18, 22, and 25). Regarding comparable phenomena in medieval art, see Oleg Grabar, “The Shared Culture of Objects,” in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 115–30; and Robin Cormack, “But is it art?” in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. Jonathan Shepherd and Simon Franklin (Aldershot, U.K.: Variorum, 1992), 219–36, esp. 229–36.
- 62 Feldman, “Luxurious Forms,” 6–9 and 12.
- 63 Ibid., 14–17.
- 64 The Byzantine origin of these cups is accepted in most scholarship (although see exceptions in note 65 below). Yet in light of recent research on related objects of Sogdian and Tang origins, these vessels and their purported Byzantine provenance might benefit from new consideration.
- 65 Scholars question the Byzantine origin of the cup from Gotland, but none has definitively reattributed the vessel. For a suggested Kievan provenance, see Anthony Cutler, “The Sculpture and Sources of ‘Byzantios’” (1972), repr. in *Byzantium, Italy, and the North*, 431–54. For a proposed Bulgarian provenance, see Veronica Sekules, *Medieval Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 187–88. For studies endorsing a Byzantine origin, see André Grabar, “Quelques observations sur le trésor de Nagy-Szent-Miklos,” *Comptes rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1968): 250–61, esp. 255–56 and 259–60, fig. 6a–b; Kiss, “Byzantine Silversmiths’ Work around AD 1000,” 310 and 312; and Aron Andersson, “A Cup from Byzantium and Late Romanesque and Early Gothic Drinking-bowls in the Dune Treasure from Gotland,” in *Mediaeval Drinking Bowls of Silver Found in Sweden* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1983), 17–34, esp. 18–19. The Gotland cup finds a close comparandum in a silver vessel found at Preslav, Bulgaria in a grave dated to the ninth or tenth century. The Preslav cup is decorated with floral and foliate designs similar to those on the Gotland cup, but it lacks animal motifs (Andersson, “A Cup from Byzantium,” 19, fig. 6).
- 66 Cécile Morrisson, “Le rôle des Varanges dans la transmission de la monnaie byzantine en Scandinavie,” in *Les pays du nord et Byzance (Scandinavie et Byzance)*, ed. Rudolf Zeitler (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1981), 131–40; and Elisabeth Piltz, “Varangian Companies for Long Distance Trade: Aspects of Interchange between Scandinavia, Rus’ and Byzantium in the 11th–12th Centuries,” in *Byzantium and Islam in Scandinavia*, ed. Elisabeth Piltz (Jönköping: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1998), 85–106. Regarding broader Byzantine artistic and economic impact on medieval Scandinavia, also see Anthony Cutler, “Garda, Källunge, and the Byzantine Tradition on Gotland,” *Art Bulletin* 51, no. 3 (1969): 257–66; idem, “The Sculpture and Sources of ‘Byzantios,’” 431–54; and idem, “Byzantine Art and the North,” 455–73.
- 67 Kiss, “Byzantine Silversmiths’ Work around AD 1000,” 309–10, fig. 7.
- 68 For Tang cups of comparable profile with similar ring handles, see Li Jian, ed., *The Glory of the Silk Road: Art from Ancient China* (Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Art Institute, 2003), 197, cat. no. 106. For discussion of the impact of western (esp. late Roman, Sasanian, and Sogdian) traditions on Tang-era metalwork (including drinking cups), see Dongfang Qi, *Tang dai jin yin qi yan jiu* [Research on Tang gold and silver] (Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, 1999), esp. 345–62; Jessica Rawson, “Central Asian Silver and Its Influence on Chinese Ceramics,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, n.s. 5 (1991): 139–51; and Clarence W. Kelley, *Chinese Gold and Silver in American Collections: Tang Dynasty, A.D. 618–907* (Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Art Institute, 1984). Regarding Sogdian imports to Tang China and the production of Sogdian works of art in the Tang capital, Chang’an, see Valerie Hansen, “The Hejia Village Hoard: A Snapshot of China’s Silk Road Trade,” *Orientalism* 34, no. 2 (2003): 14–19; and Qi Dongfang, “The Burial Location and Dating of the Hejia Village Treasures,” *Orientalism* 34, no. 2 (2003): 20–24.
- 69 Imperial *spatharokandidatos* was a mid-ranking court title. A *dioiketes* was a fiscal office with responsibilities that may have included the collection of taxes. The date for this unpublished object is supported by the fact that among other seals recording this office, the latest is attributed to the late ninth to early tenth century: George Zacos and A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1, pt. 3 (Basel: n.p., 1972), 1766, no. 3161.
- 70 Adolph Goldschmidt and Kurt Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.–XIII. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2, *Reliefs* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1934), 16–17, fig. 5; Kurt Weitzmann, *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei des IX und X Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1935; repr. 2 vols., Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), 1: esp. 16–18, plate

- XXI, fig. 115, and 2:28 and 78; Kiss, "Byzantine Silversmiths' Work around AD 1000," 310, fig. 10; and Anne McCabe, *A Byzantine Encyclopedia of Horse Medicine: The Sources, Compilations, and Transmission of the Hippiatrica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. 23–27.
- 71 On the tradition of horse care in Byzantium, see A.-M. Doyen-Higuet, "The Hippiatrica and Byzantine Veterinary Medicine," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 111–20; and McCabe, *A Byzantine Encyclopedia of Horse Medicine*.
- 72 The presence of two illuminations depicting birds at the beginning of Phillips 1538 has led to the suggestion that the manuscript might have originally included a treatise on the care of birds, specifically falcons (McCabe, *A Byzantine Encyclopedia of Horse Medicine*, 24). The pages on which the *feng huang* appears, however, are integral to the *Hippiatrica* text.
- 73 McCabe, *A Byzantine Encyclopedia of Horse Medicine*, 15.
- 74 An imperial patron undoubtedly qualifies for Roger's adopter category of "innovators." See note 44 above.
- 75 McCabe, *A Byzantine Encyclopedia of Horse Medicine*, 24–25 and 300.
- 76 Kiss, "Byzantine Silversmiths' Work around ad 1000," 311; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 2:34, no. 32, plates XI and XII; and Helen Evans, ed., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, ad 843–1261* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 131–32, cat. no. 79 (back panel not illustrated).
- 77 See, for example, Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), figs. 69, 71, 76, 77, 81, 83, 87, and 88.
- 78 Another middle Byzantine devotional ivory, the so-called Harbaville Triptych, also depicts a cross within a paradisiacal garden on its reverse (Evans, *The Glory of Byzantium*, 133–34, cat. no. 80). Although displaying a more naturalistic representation than the motifs on the back of the Vatican triptych, the Harbaville Triptych nonetheless attests to the currency of the theme of the redeeming cross of paradise in other works of art from this era.
- 79 Indeed late antique authors, including Josephus (first century CE) identify India as the location of the Garden of Eden, and animals of paradise, including birds, symbolize the other-worldly realm in texts and images: C. R. Whittaker, "To Reach out to India and Pursue the Dawn": The Roman View of India," in *Rome and Its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire* (London: Routledge, 2004), 144–62, esp. 148.
- 80 The box is thought to have been produced in Constantinople and transported to Troyes by Jean Langlois, chaplain to Cramier de Traisnel, bishop of Troyes, following the Sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, vol. 1, *Kästen* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1930), 63, cat. no. 122, plate LXIX and LXX; Géza De Francovich, "Il concetto della regalità nell'arte sasanide e l'interpretazione di due opere d'arte bizantine del periodo della dinastia macedone: la cassetta eburnea di Troyes e la corona di Costantino IX Monomaco di Budapest," *Arte lombarda* 9 (1964): 1–48; Kiss, "Byzantine Silversmiths' Work around AD 1000," 311–13; and Walker, "Exotic Elements in Middle Byzantine Secular Art," 226–316.
- 81 Henry Maguire explores the connection of the phoenix to Roman and early Byzantine imperial ideology, particularly to the concept of imperial renewal, but remains uncommitted as to whether or not the *feng huang* on the Troyes Casket was recognizable as a phoenix by the Byzantine viewer or contributed to the object's triumphal message: Maguire, "Imperial Gardens and the Rhetoric of Renewal," in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, Fourth–Thirteenth Centuries*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Aldershot, U.K.: Variorum, 1994), 181–98, esp. 197; and idem, "Casket with Emperors and Hunters," in Evans, *The Glory of Byzantium*, 204–206, cat. no. 141, esp. 206. For discussion of the phoenix as a symbol of imperial renewal, also see idem, *Earth and Ocean*, 63–64; and Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix*, passim.
- 82 In Rogers' terms, these objects would have been commissioned and/or produced by individuals belonging to the adopter categories of "innovators" and "early adopters." See note 44 above.
- 83 Concerning the conditions under which adoption takes place, see note 46 above. It is worth noting that while the *feng huang* itself was not adopted broadly in Byzantium, the floral and foliate motifs that often surround it — and that also appear independently of the *feng huang* in other works of art — became extremely popular throughout a broad range of media. Perhaps the more successful diffusion of the vegetal designs was the result of their lower semantic valence and exclusively ornamental nature: M. Alison Frantz, "Byzantine Illuminated Ornament: A Study in Chronology," *Art Bulletin* 16 (1934): 43–76, esp. 55, 57–58, plates VII–XII and XVI–XVIII; Weitzmann, *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei*, passim.; and Kiss, "Byzantine Silversmiths' Work around 1000," esp. 309–14.
- 84 Within the terminology of diffusion and network analysis, the *feng huang* might be said to have a "higher risk" associated with the motif, causing the threshold for adoption to increase: Valente, *Network Models*, 63–78.

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GLOBALIZING CULTURES: ART AND MOBILITY
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

NEBAHAT AVCIOĞLU AND FINBARR BARRY FLOOD,
GUEST EDITORS

CONTENTS

- 7 INTRODUCTION
Globalizing Cultures: Art and Mobility in the Eighteenth Century
Nebahat Avcıoğlu and Finbarr Barry Flood
- 39 A ROOMFUL OF MIRRORS
The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks, 1550–1700
Sanjay Subrahmanyam
- 84 LOOKING EAST
Jean-Etienne Liotard, the Turkish Painter
Kristel Smentek
- 113 EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN PRINCESSES AS COLLECTORS
From Chinese to European Porcelain
Tülay Artan
- 148 TRANSLATING VISIONS
A Japanese Lacquer Plaque of the Haram of Mecca in the L. A. Mayer Memorial Museum, Jerusalem
Anton Schweizer and Avinoam Shalem
- 175 THE “PALAIS INDIENS” COLLECTION OF 1774
Representing Mughal Architecture in Late Eighteenth-Century India
Chanchal Dadlani
- 198 “DRESSING TURKS IN THE FRENCH MANNER”
Mouradgea d’Ohsson’s Panorama of the Ottoman Empire
Elisabeth A. Fraser
- 231 HISTORY OR THEORY?
French Antiquarianism, Cairene Architecture, and Enlightenment Thinking
Mercedes Volait

INTRODUCTION

Globalizing Cultures: Art and Mobility in the Eighteenth Century

THE RECENT HISTORIOGRAPHY of European colonialism has often postulated asymmetrical relations between Orient and Occident. The conceptual genealogies of many of the relevant studies can be traced to *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said's contentious, magisterial, and extraordinarily influential indictment of the interrelationship between knowledge and power. The Saidian interpretive framework has been particularly fruitful in rethinking and rewriting the histories of cross-cultural encounters as they relate to the art and architecture of the modern period.¹ In *Orientalism*, however, Said makes a distinction that is key to the inspiration for this volume. Adumbrating the trajectory of European textual representations of the Orient (largely the Arab world and India), Said contrasts the eighteenth century with the centuries that preceded it: "Whereas Renaissance historians judged the Orient inflexibly as an enemy, those of the eighteenth century confronted the Orient's peculiarities with some detachment and with some attempt at dealing directly with Oriental source material, perhaps because such a technique helped a European to know himself better."² In a passage that follows several pages later, Said makes a further distinction: "Sensuality, promise, terror, sublimity, idyllic pleasure, intense energy: the Orient as a figure in the pre-Romantic, pretechnical Orientalist imagination of late-eighteenth-century Europe was really a chameleon-like quality called (adjectivally) 'Oriental.' But this free-floating Orient would be severely curtailed with the advent of academic Orientalism."³ Bracketed between the enduring hostilities of the Renaissance and the rigid academic taxonomies of the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century thus appears unique as a time of flexibility, mobility, and possibility as regards European relationships with and representations of the Orient. As Oleg Grabar has suggested, "for better or worse, depending on one's ideological bent," many aspects of Europeans' perceptions "of the world and its history [were] shaped during the eighteenth century."⁴

In the three decades since its publication, *Orientalism* has sustained criticism for its reductive treatment of complex historical processes, as well as for its theoretical inconsistencies.⁵ In addition, notions of unrelenting hostility between Renaissance Europe and the Orient have been mitigated by research demonstrating the complex cultural entanglements of the Ottoman Empire and the mercantile city-states of peninsular Italy, and their mutual centrality to the phenomena comprising the Renaissance.⁶ Nevertheless, Said's emphasis on the eighteenth century as marked by a difference from the academic Orientalism of the nineteenth century bears much closer consideration than it has received to date.

If the distinction that Said makes regarding European representations of the Orient forms one axis of inquiry for this volume, the other is necessitated by the paucity of studies on the art and architecture of the eighteenth century in the artistic histories of the Middle East and South Asia, despite the period's centrality to the

development of incipient globalization (or of globalized world views).⁷ In general, analyses of the transregional cultural flows that marked the century have privileged the reception of European forms and ideas, ignoring or marginalizing the multidirectionality of exchange, preexisting or enhanced cultural flows that operated outside European parameters, and the role of major imperial and sub-imperial centers such as Istanbul or Lucknow in the dissemination and mediation of Western European forms.

By bringing together essays dedicated to different geographical regions, artistic practices, and media, the present volume seeks to draw attention to the complex transregional imbrications affected by the mobility of cultural forms during the eighteenth century. As Said's observations in *Orientalism* suggest, for much of the eighteenth century, epistemological interest in cultural difference was neither fully predicated on the "other" as one element of a binary category nor on the need for empirical data provided by European observation alone. On the contrary, the entanglements of the Orient/Occident are figured by the character of the Nabob (and the ambivalence that he aroused) or by the images of Europeans depicted *à la turque* by Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671–1737) and Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–89), images that popularized modes of self-representation central to the *turqueries* and oriental masquerades of the period.⁸ The *goût turque* that characterized these extravaganzas found more static expression in eighteenth-century landscape architecture, painted interiors, furniture, decorative arts, and architecture. Representation was clearly important here as a vector for the appropriation and reception of "oriental" elements and styles and their centrality to the formation of contemporary European notions of identity.

This desire for appropriation, consumption, and knowledge of "others" was not unique to the West, nor did European notions of the East go uncontested. The "Tulip Period" (Lâle Devri) in Ottoman historiography (ca. 1703–30) is, for example, defined by openness to Europe in Ottoman administration, technology, and artistic production. In 1727, during the reign of Ahmed III, the Hungarian convert Ibrahim Müteferrikâ established a celebrated Ottoman-language printing press in Istanbul, among the products of which was the *Tarîh-i Hind-i garbî* (History of the Americas) based on the sixteenth-century Italian translations of *Historia de las Indias* by the Spanish historian Francisco López de Gómara.⁹ Published in 1730, the volume included twelve woodcut prints providing imaginative visualizations of the flora and fauna of the Americas to accompany the text. While Müteferrikâ's printing press aimed to translate European works for local consumption, Ottoman intellectuals took up the pen to enlighten Europeans about the nature of the Ottoman Empire. Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson's *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman* (Panorama of the Ottoman Empire), published in two volumes in 1787 and 1790,

was the first illustrated history written by an Ottoman to be published in French and produced by French artists and artisans, some following Ottoman originals.¹⁰ For example, the possibility that Ohsson's depiction of Mecca owed something to Ottoman paintings of the holy city has been raised by several scholars. Grabar has also suggested that one of the earliest images of Mecca to appear in Europe, an engraving by the Viennese architect Fischer von Erlach (1721 and 1725), may have drawn on similar sources.¹¹

The essays comprising this volume remind us that exposure to transregional cultures and cultural forms stimulated local practices, thought, and political agendas as well as new technologies. They demonstrate that from trade to travel-book illustrations, from images of foreign landscapes to modes of dress, from practices of conspicuous collection and display to contemplation and criticism, art and architecture in the eighteenth century became not only a public phenomenon but also a cross-cultural concern. Austrian, British, Danish, Dutch, and French artists, architects, patrons, and critics all responded to the world outside Europe in the content, style, or techniques of their practices. Ottoman, Indian, Persian, and Japanese painters, authors, craftsman, and intellectuals were equally enthusiastic about both receiving and responding to the arts of Europe.

A secondary aim of the volume, therefore, is to underline the absence of a single or uniform mode of viewing, appropriating, and interacting with "others" during the eighteenth century. Instead, it tries to show how specific needs, general political conditions, and contemporary questions of commerce, creed, and technology informed the emergence of cross-cultural forms and practices.

While the majority of the articles in this volume focus on the eighteenth century proper, the first and the last bracket the century by considering the antecedents and legacies of the mutual curiosity that peaked in the 1700s around the circulation of artifacts, ideas, and individuals. The opening essay by Sanjay Subrahmanyam traces artistic interactions between India and Western Europe from the perspective of the *longue durée*, setting the scene for the essays that follow by emphasizing the reciprocal cultural interests of the Gunpowder Empires and Europe. Subrahmanyam's article considers the presence of the Jesuits in the Mughal court and the evidence that Mughal paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries offer for the reception of European (including explicitly Christian) iconographies. Unlike previous work on this topic, Subrahmanyam's essay also highlights the reception of Mughal painting in Europe during this period, drawing attention to the role of European artists in facilitating the transportation of Indian objects, jewelry, and illustrated manuscripts to the West. Many of these were then used as sources by sedentary European artists, including Rembrandt. The idiosyncratic paintings of late seventeenth-century Dutch artist Wil-

lem Schellinks (ca. 1627–78), which allude to and embrace Mughal iconographic conventions, are of particular interest, appearing to prefigure the eclecticism of many eighteenth-century European visual practices.

While Subrahmanyam's opening essay highlights the circulation of people and images between Europe and South Asia, assuming a diachronic approach to their cultural value and transformative impact, the closing article by Mercedes Volait casts a retrospective eye on eighteenth-century European conceptual and visual categories. Her essay is concerned with the representation of Egypt through the work of nineteenth-century French Orientalists. The *Description de l'Égypte* (1809) that resulted from Napoléon's colonial adventure of 1798 has long been seen as a key moment in the assertion of Enlightenment aesthetics, ideologies, and taxonomies, with its meticulous recording of the customs, manners, and monuments of Egypt.¹² Yet Volait's contribution reveals that it may have been the exceptional project of no less exceptional political and military circumstances. Volait argues that in later nineteenth-century European classifications of "Arab" art and architecture, the conceptual and visual categories constructed around the collecting strategies of eighteenth-century artists and travelers came to constitute comprehensive discourses about the East based on etic disciplinary modes lacking in any local, historical, or contextual basis. Examining the works of artist/traveler/collector Louis-François Cassas (1756–1827), whose architectural images were intended to permit formal comparisons across cultures, and Jules Bourgoïn (1838–1908), the theoretician of Islamic ornament, amongst others, Volait highlights continuities between an Enlightenment propensity towards formal rationality, abstraction, and universalism, and the universalized epistemologies and comparative taxonomies that marked nineteenth-century Orientalism.

Bracketed between Subrahmanyam's discussion of transregional image flows before the eighteenth century and Volait's analysis of the debt owed by nineteenth-century Orientalist representation to Enlightenment epistemology, the articles comprising the rest of the volume explore aspects of the transregional circulation and consumption of artistic concepts, forms, images, and media in places ranging from Egypt and Turkey to India and Western Europe. While no claim is made for comprehensive coverage of the period, the essays aim to offer a new vision of the "global" eighteenth century. Among the topics discussed are an expansion in the economic base of artistic patronage through the rise of sub-imperial elites or mercantile bourgeoisies; the role of mobility in the figure of the traveler and illustrated travelogues (and the mediating role of both); the reciprocity of the cultural exchanges occasioned by these developments; the consequent embrace of iconographic and stylistic eclecticism (whether reflexively or not) as an aesthetic value; and the mirroring function of cultural forms enabled through circulation.

Mobility, Mercantile Imperialism, and Eclecticism

Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the exchanges examined in this volume is their dependence upon new patterns of mobility often associated with the emergence of what might be dubbed “mercantile imperialism.” The phenomenon was marked by the development of powerful and pioneering mercantile interests during a period when Britain, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and even landlocked Austria competed for trading privileges (and often economic and political control) over large portions of the globe. One result was the increased mobility of specific individuals—adventurers, envoys, or merchants—who traveled between the Orient and Europe, or within both. Accounts of Europeans in the Orient have received sustained attention, but the eighteenth century also sees the appearance of both works on the Orient written by its denizens, and accounts of Europe written by Eastern visitors. The two most famous examples are Ohsson’s *Tableau général de l’Empire Othoman* written between 1764 and 1784, and the *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, an Indian surgeon who served in the Bengal army of the East India Company before settling in the British Isles, published in 1794.

Elisabeth Fraser’s contribution to this volume deals with the first of these works, and its lavish illustrative program, which draws attention to the Ottoman contribution to the rise in production of illustrated travel literature as the century progressed. Its author, Muradcan Tosunyan (1740–1807), an Ottoman-Armenian interpreter to the Swedish Embassy in Istanbul, traveled to Paris to publish his *oeuvre*, which he ultimately dedicated to the Swedish King Gustav III.¹³ His illustrated history of the Ottoman Empire represented a tolerant Islam in an Oriental polity that was in many ways an answer to contemporary European representations of Islam as a flawed religion. With eight hundred pages of text and 233 plates, the work was unique as a reflective history of the Ottoman self intended for the consumption of others. Fraser’s article details the painstaking production of this work, which brought together European and Ottoman elements to produce a complex culturally (and visually) heterogeneous object.

During the same period, Dean Mahomet (1759–1851), who arrived in Ireland with Captain Godfrey Evan Baker, his East India Company employer, in 1784, and married a member of the Anglo-Irish gentry soon after, published his memoir. Written for an Anglophone audience, the work adopts the epistolary form then in vogue in England, especially for travel writing.¹⁴ The *Travels* point to a burgeoning Indian diaspora in the British Isles at the end of the eighteenth century. Dean Mahomet stands at one end of the social spectrum of this diaspora. At the other are the Indian servants, slaves, and sailors whose penurious circumstances were increasingly to preoccupy the British authorities in the following century.¹⁵

If Dean Mahomet represented India to a British metropolitan audience, other more transient Indian visitors during the same period recorded their impressions of England and Ireland for the educated Persian-speaking elites of their homeland. Two Persian accounts written by Indian Muslims who visited England in the second half of the eighteenth century are known; the *Shigarf-nāma-e Vilāyat* (Wonder Book of England) of Mirza ʿĪtisām ud Din, an envoy of the Mughal court, who traveled in England between 1766 and 1769, and the *Masīr-e Tālibī fī bilād-e afranjī* (Talib's Travels in the Land of the Franks), written by Mirza Abu Talib Khan Isfahani, an inhabitant of Lucknow and former official of the Nawabi court of Awadh (Oudh), who visited England and Ireland between 1799 and 1803. Both were translated in full or in part into English in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Abu Talib also traveled in Ireland, encountering Dean Mahomet there in 1799; the meeting features in the *Masīr-e Tālibī*, where Abu Talib informs his Indian readers of Dean Mahomet's success, his marriage to a beautiful woman of rank, and his authorship of a book outlining the customs of India.¹⁶

Recently, a third Persian travelogue has come to light, an account written by Munshi Ismaʿil, a Bengali secretary to a servant of the East India Company, who was in England between 1772 and 1773. Munshi Ismaʿil visited Bath, and the coffee houses and gardens then fashionable in London, but from the point of view of the transcultural reception of architectural forms, perhaps the most interesting part of his account is the horror inspired in him by the uniformity of contemporary Georgian domestic architecture. This related to the impossibility of distinguishing between adjacent Georgian town houses, apart from by their number-plates, which led him to avoid unaccompanied explorations of the city.¹⁷

Many of these authors (and those whom they inspired although they had never set foot in Europe) demonstrate a comparative approach to their delineation of European life and customs, including the structures of contemporary politics. They often note aspects of social organization and technological developments, including the speed with which the printing press permitted the circulation of texts free from the errors introduced through dependence on scribes.¹⁸

Interestingly, the question of gender and comparative approaches to its articulation in social organization emerge as topics in these Indo-Persian travelogues on Western Europe just as the same topic was being addressed in contemporary European accounts of the Orient. Among the latter, perhaps the most radical contemporary cross-cultural treatment of gender is found in the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762), the wife of Edward Montagu, the English ambassador in Istanbul, for whom, by comparison with their English contemporaries, the denizens of the harem were “(perhaps) freer than any ladies in the universe.”¹⁹



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1
Jonathan Richardson (attrib.), *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ca. 1725.
Oil on canvas. Reproduction by
kind permission of the 8th Earl of
Harrowby, Sandon Hall



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2
Abdülcelil Çelebi, known as
Levni, *Dancing Girl*, ca. 1720.
Watercolor on paper. Topkapı Palace
Museum, Istanbul, H. 2164, fol. 18r.
Photograph © Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi

Published in her famous *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763) from the Ottoman Empire, Lady Mary's critiques of the society into which she was born and her own "otherness" from it have assumed a paradigmatic status in modern scholarship.²⁰ A singular character of her time, Lady Mary was a traveler, poet, and intellectual, and *de facto* outsider in a world where learning, literature, and exploration formed the exclusive domain of men. The daughter of a nobleman, she was largely self-educated, and while in Turkey she learnt Turkish and conversed with Ottoman dignitaries, which led to the writing of her celebrated letters between 1716 and 1718.

Upon her return to England, Lady Mary added a second layer, this time pictorial, to the constitution of her phantasmagorical self (Fig. 1). In 1725 she had her portrait painted by Jonathan Richardson (1665–1745). The full-length standing figure incorporates the visual signs of her sojourn in the Ottoman Empire, indicated by her Turkish attire and the distant view of a city (possibly Constantinople, though the artist makes no particular effort to confirm it). This was not the first time a European was depicted in an oriental costume. Since the seventeenth century it had been a commonplace for noble travelers and traders in the east to show off the luxurious fabrics or goods obtained from the Ottoman sultans or the Persian shahs as a symbol of their own status and wealth. In the eighteenth century, how-



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3
A Turkish Lady from The Rålamb
 Costume Book, 17th century.
 Watercolor on paper. Royal Library,
 Stockholm, Cod.Rål. 8:o nr 10,
 fol.6. Photograph © Royal Library/
 Manuscript Department, Stockholm

ever, portraits of European noblemen and women (usually those returned from the Ottoman Empire or India) dressed *à l'orientale* became more about the constitution and representation of newly constructed identities than about the presentation of wealth and riches.²¹ As Richardson wrote in his treatise on painting, “to sit for one’s picture is to have an abstract of one’s life written, and published.”²²

Lady Mary’s portrait exemplifies the utility of transcultural idioms and motifs in certain kinds of eighteenth-century self-representations. A substantial portion of her letters from the Ottoman Empire, written as a kind of travel narrative, was devoted to comparisons and analyses of the commensurability between the two cultures. Most interestingly, she observes and articulates the affinity between English and Ottoman culture through a series of commentaries on art. Describing her experience in a Turkish bath at Sofia she writes: “There were many (women) amongst them, as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of a Guido or Titian, --- and most of their skins shiningly white.... I had the wickedness enough, to wish secretly, that Mr. Gervais could have been there invisibly. I fancy it would have very much improved his art...”²³ Through the portrait that she commissioned from Richardson, Lady Mary’s speculation that these Turkish ladies might be considered as art works or models before an English artist can now be brought into play by Lady Mary herself posing as a “Turk.”

This presumed “Turkishness” finds further resonances in Richardson’s mode of rendering the standing figure, which recalls the *Dancing Girl* by the Ottoman painter Abdülcelil Çelebi (known as Levni, d. 1732), part of an album containing forty-two full-length portraits dating from the first decades of the eighteenth century (Fig. 2). With their innovative style, manifest in a greater animation of figures and more detailed rendition of moods and costumes than are found in earlier Ottoman art, Levni’s paintings are usually considered to be the hallmark of the age of reform during the reign of Ahmed III (1703–30), the “Tulip Period,” characterized by its receptiveness to European technology and art. As Kristel Smentek’s essay suggests, the presence of Levni’s contemporary, the Flemish artist Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, who lived in Istanbul for thirty-eight years, may not have been inconsequential for this development.²⁴



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4
Johann Zoffany, *Colonel Antoine Polier, Claude Martin, John Wombwell with the Artist in the Background in Lucknow, 1786*. Oil on canvas. Photograph © The Victoria Museum, Calcutta

Despite the stylistic differences between Levni's and Richardson's works, there are striking resemblances in the manners in which the female figures in both paintings are rendered. That both figures are wearing Turkish dresses with décolleté necklines, pearl-strung headbands, three-band bracelets, and jewelry-encrusted belts is obvious enough. But Richardson's canvas also demonstrates a conscious appropriation of the "Oriental" *manière* as understood by European observers. The French cartographer Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville, for instance, described the Ottoman and Persian style of portraiture in 1721 as offering only profile or three-quarter profile views, without shadow, and with smooth finish and bright colors.²⁵ In this respect, Richardson's use of the forward-tilting three-quarter face, as well as the S-shaped posture pulling up a skirt, is akin to Levni's innovative style, which first appeared at the end of the seventeenth century and was later nuanced by him in the early eighteenth. Richardson's access to Turkish art has not been determined. Yet we now know that Levni's album existed in at least two further copies.²⁶ In addition, Ottoman paintings circulated in Europe either as individual pages or through a number of reproductions bound into albums, such as the Rålamb Costume Book, which travelled to Sweden with Claes Rålamb, the Swedish ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century (Fig. 3).²⁷ By the same token Lady Mary may have acquired works by Ottoman artists that Richardson was then able to draw from, a likely possibility for an artist who himself collected oriental paintings and drew studies of Ottoman figures.²⁸

The phenomenon to which Levni's and Richardson's art attests was by no means confined to Europe. On the contrary, recent scholarship has brought to light documentary evidence for the collection of oriental manuscripts by Europeans and their use by contemporary European artists living abroad.²⁹ For instance, the German-born Johan Zoffany's painting of Colonel Polier and his

friends at Lucknow (1786) shows the artist and his patrons surrounding an album of seventeenth-century Mughal miniatures owned by Antoine Polier, a Swiss national of French descent employed by the British East India Company (Fig. 4).³⁰ Before his arrival in India in 1765 Zoffany was given the task of copying Mughal miniatures by Empress Maria Theresa to accompany the original Mughal paintings decorating her extraordinary Millionenzimmer at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna.³¹ In India, first under the patronage of Warren Hastings, governor-general of the East India Company, and later other European patrons, Zoffany experimented with compositional strategies and tonal conventions associated with the work of contemporary Indian artists, synthesizing British and Mughal sub-imperial traditions in a manner inflected by contemporary political concerns.³² Through such experiments, Zoffany and other artists helped internationalize a “hybrid” style defined by a *mélange* of different techniques, palettes, and pictorial conventions.

Read against this background of contemporary artistic mobility, what some scholars have identified as an “unconventional” style, or ambiguity, particularly with regard to high finish and the undefined landscape, is what gives the impression that Richardson’s portrait of Lady Mary is more than the mere fantasy of being the “other.”³³ Yet scholars have been reluctant to identify the negotiated cross-cultural elements in Richardson’s portrait of Lady Mary. Although it is true that Richardson never set foot outside Europe, art historians’ unwillingness to see the convergence of different artistic traditions persists even in works by those artists who had traveled abroad.

In her paper, Smentek demonstrates how European artists living and working in the Ottoman Empire, such as the Genevan Jean-Étienne Liotard, made their careers producing works for clients from all over Europe as well as the empire. Yet, just as the apparent adoption of Ottoman representational modes in Richardson’s portrait of Lady Mary has escaped notice, for all of Liotard’s keen interest in Ottoman culture no one directly connected his art with Ottoman painting, not even the artist himself. Although the fact that Liotard’s art reflected an emphatic synthesis of cultures was not lost on eighteenth-century viewers, it was not associated directly with Turkish painting, but with Chinese style. Smentek’s study draws our attention on the one hand to the Turkish elements of Liotard’s art, and on the other to the criticism directed against him and other artists of his time who experimented with imported art forms. Directly or indirectly, both Liotard and François Boucher, the proselytizer of the rococo and the favorite painter of Madame de Pompadour, were accused of debasing Western artistic tradition by harboring a passion for non-European art, Chinese in both cases. The inability to appreciate non-Western art was in fact driven by nationalist and academic snobbism. Writing in 1753, for



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Gérard Scotin, after Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, *La Sultane Asseki [sic], ou Sultane Reine*. Plate 3 from *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes Nations du Levant*, 1714–15. Paris: Le Hay & Duchange. Photograph © BnF

example, William Hogarth suggested that Chinese painting represented a “mean taste,” not to be admired or emulated.³⁴

Today’s scholars may not share Hogarth’s aversion to orientalizing aesthetics, but they have failed to note the Ottoman valences of Richardson’s portrait of Lady Mary, relating its “ethnographic” aspects to the impact of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour’s paintings of Turkish life and “types” rather than considering the possibility that he had direct access to Ottoman works. Vanmour served as the official artist to the French ambassador, the marquis de Ferriol, in Istanbul, in the first decade of the eighteenth century, and may have known Lady Mary personally since a Conversation Piece depicting her is attributed to him. The engraved versions of Vanmour’s paintings also had an extraordinarily wide appeal in Europe after their appearance in the *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes Nations du Levant*, published in Paris in 1714–15 (Fig. 5).³⁵ However, given Lady Mary’s critical stance on European travelers and how they represented the Ottomans, it is rather unlikely that she would have accepted to have her portrait modeled on “second-hand” depictions of the Turk.

This is not to deny that prints circulated, mediated the reception of “Oriental” forms, and generated particular perceptions of the East. However, even in the context where the impact of Vanmour’s engravings has been proven, an additional “authentic” Oriental source was often also mined to underwrite claims of accuracy. Madame de Pompadour’s Ottomanesque canvases painted by Carle van Loo (1705–65) for the Turkish room in the chateau of Bellevue (1748–51) can directly be linked to Vanmour’s *Recueil de cent estampes*, based on the shared visual program. Among the canvases was the image of a sultana being served coffee by a black



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 Jacques-Firmin Beauvarlet, after
 Carle van Loo, *La Sultana*, undated
 (before 1797). Metal engraving.
 Photograph © Musée du Louvre,
 Paris, KM006528

servant, the former apparently modeled on Pompadour herself (Fig. 6).³⁶ The complexities of the mirroring effect in Pompadour's chambers are highlighted by the dual sources upon which van Loo drew: Vanmour's *Recueil de cent estampes*, and a collection of Ottoman costume albums in similar vein, bound together under the title *Costumes turcs de la cour et de la ville de Constantinople en 1720, peints en Turquie, par un artiste turc* (Fig. 7).³⁷ In this case, both European paintings of Ottoman subjects "translated" into the medium of lithography and Ottoman originals inspired by a contemporary Western interest in "types" were mined for images of a royal mistress, depicted *à la turque*, whose iconography was apparently intended to make a point about her relationship to the French king.³⁸

Eighteenth-century portraits of Europeans dressed *à l'orientale* illustrate the phenomenon that Inge Boer identifies as "cultural cross-dressing." Denoting trans-cultural modes of self-fashioning (and self-representation), the term emphasizes both the constructed nature of identity and its performative aspect as something that is fashioned dynamically and not an inherent characteristic of the biological body.³⁹ Occurring at the intersection between two or more sign systems, cultural cross-dressing is the negotiated product of circulation, both of representations and their signifying potential.⁴⁰ To be effective, it needs to distinguish the subject from her or his immediate cultural context while associating her/him with an alternative identity; as a consequence, it is often characterized by a simultaneous assertion and disavowal of alterity.⁴¹ Jean-Étienne Liotard's adoption of "Turkish" dress performed and produced the signs of a cultural cross-dressing that also characterized his renderings of European subjects in Istanbul *à la turque*. Smentek's article demonstrates how this experience transformed both him and his art. In addition to dressing like an Ottoman, he grew a long, distinctive beard, which he cut off only



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 Untitled (Sultana taking coffee). Plate
 4 from *Costumes turcs de la cour et
 de la ville de Constantinople en 1720*,
peints en Turquie, par un artiste turc,
 before 1720. Watercolor. Photograph
 © BnF OD-6-4 plate 4

in 1756 on the eve of his wedding.⁴² Employed by Lady Mary Montagu's nephew John Montagu, Lord Sandwich, on his Grand Tour between 1738 and 1740, Liotard spent five years in residence in Istanbul and elsewhere in the empire. Although he did not go as far as Lady Mary's son Edward Montagu, who converted to Islam, Liotard labeled himself the "Turkish Painter" (*le peintre turc*) until the end of his life.

The appropriation of Ottoman forms by Lady Mary, Madame de Pompadour, and Liotard articulates a mode of self-representation inseparable from critiques of contemporary European society. The endeavor was part of a more widespread eighteenth-century phenomenon in which "Oriental" motifs and themes were appropriated for veiled commentaries on and critiques of social, political, and religious conditions in Europe. *The Letters of a Turkish Spy* by Giovanni Paolo Marana, published first in 1684–6 in French, is considered to have inaugurated this new genre of critical literature.⁴³ Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721) and Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* (1765) apparently took it as a model for discussing a wide range of themes of European cultural and religious identity in relation to the Orient. This critical literature developed alongside a flourishing genre of travel accounts about the Ottoman Empire, which also provided Europeans with plots suitable for political commentary in the guise of plays and novels—such as *Mustafa: a Tragedy* (1739) by David Mallet, and *Zaire* (1732) and *La Fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète* (1741) by Voltaire.

Much of this literature also draws upon and assumes broader developments in the representation and consumption of the "Orient," including the experience of diplomatic visits of Ottoman or Persian officials to Europe.⁴⁴ Some of it acknowledges that literature was not the only domain of Enlightenment cultural rhetoric: art and architecture also articulated some of the most radical views on royal pre-

rogative, religious tolerance, and later, in the nineteenth century, on class politics.⁴⁵ In Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, Rica, one of the Persian visitors to Paris, finds himself caught within the resulting networks of representation and viewing:

If I was at a show, I would see a hundred lorgnettes focused on my face straight away. In a word, never was a man seen as much as I was. It made me smile sometimes, to hear people who had hardly even been out of their rooms saying to each other: "You've got to admit, he really does look Persian." It was incredible: I found portraits of me everywhere; I saw multiples of myself in every shop and on every mantelpiece, so greatly did people fear that they had not had a good enough look at me.⁴⁶

The interest aroused by foreigners is confirmed by the accounts of eighteenth-century Indian and Middle Eastern visitors to European capitals.⁴⁷ Similarly the consumption of these "others" through representation is attested by the production of porcelain figurines of exotic types, both sultans and slaves, and the Chinese, Egyptian and Indian scenes by European artists that were soon to be transferred to English and French tableware and wallpaper.⁴⁸

Highlighting the ubiquity of Oriental images in early eighteenth-century Europe, the passage from *Lettres persanes* just cited also illustrates the close relationship between the desire for empirical knowledge, new technologies of representation and reproduction, and the burgeoning of a mercantile spirit among the European bourgeoisie. The vicarious participation in the experience of the Orient enabled by consumption is parodied in another passage from *Lettres persanes*, in which the first-hand knowledge of Isfahan communicated by Rica, Montesquieu's Persian native, is contradicted by a Parisian who, having never seen Isfahan, is sure of his own knowledge, for it is derived from the accounts of the French travelers Sir John Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier.⁴⁹ Chardin was particularly praised as "the eminent traveler and expert on Islamic matters," becoming the first French traveler to be knighted and being made a member of the Royal Society in 1682.⁵⁰ The invocation of his expertise illustrates how travel and travel literature played an increasingly prominent role in facilitating the vicarious (if selective) consumption of far distant regions.

Contemporary patterns of consumption are also illustrated by the activities of the diplomatic missions that provided models for Montesquieu's Persians. After the momentous mission of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, the Ottoman envoy to France in 1721, Ottoman ambassadors in France, Sweden, Austria, and Germany were actively involved in the modalities of cultural exchange.⁵¹ Mehmed Efendi's four-and-a-half-month stay in France resulted in the collection of architectural

books, plans, and views of various French palaces, as well as in an extensive commentary on French civilization, which was also intended to be illustrated. Although it was not uncommon for ambassadors to provide accounts of their visits and share them with their foreign counterparts, Mehmed Efendi's was unprecedented for it was translated into French and published immediately after it was written, appearing in several editions in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵² In 1742, Mehmed Said Effendi, the second Ottoman envoy, had his full-length portrait painted by Jacques Aved in Paris and displayed at the Salon du Louvre in the same year. He was not the first or the last Ottoman official to be depicted by a European artist: Ottoman sultans and dignitaries had been portrayed by foreigners from life and/or imagination since the fifteenth century. While in the Ottoman Empire, Liotard made pastel portraits of the Grand vizier Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha and other officials in 1742. Nor was Mehmed Said Efendi the first Ottoman to be portrayed while in Europe. His father Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi's engraved half-length portrait also exists. Yet the life-size, standing figure of the ambassador in full public view marks a striking departure from the earlier representations of the Turk.⁵³

These sorts of phenomena, where the denizens of the East were active agents of transculturation, must be understood as an integral part of diplomatic strategies associated with contemporary processes of "globalization." In her contribution to this volume, Tülay Artan demonstrates how the Ottoman princess Hadice Sultan the Younger's commissions of European porcelain differed greatly from earlier palace acquisitions of Chinese ceramics. As Artan demonstrates, Hadice (1768–1822) mobilized the Ottoman ambassadors in Europe not only to collect porcelain but also to commission works that would reflect her taste and patronage. In this way, she participated in contemporary patterns of imperial consumption, which included Madame de Pompadour's chambers at Bellevue, and Catherine II of Russia's commission of a dinner set from Josiah Wedgwood in England, the famous Green Frog Service bearing her coat of arms.

The career trajectory of Dean Mahomet, the Indian author of the *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, illustrates how similar patterns of Oriental/Occidental consumption prevailed even outside courtly circles. In addition to his authorial talents, Dean Mahomet proved to be a skillful entrepreneur, who opened the Hindostanee Coffee House after moving to London in 1810. Catering to the Nabobs lately returned from India, the coffee house served Indian cuisine and water-pipes in an "Oriental" ambience conjured by bamboo chairs and painted Indian landscapes.⁵⁴ Adorned with Oriental artifacts and images, Dean Mahomet's coffee house reminds us that the consumption of artistic forms and idioms is inseparable from the global circulation of cultural forms more generally. Among the relevant examples are baths, modes of dress, and even foodstuffs—the much-criticized "Curries and Peelaws"



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Thomas Daniell, *Large Composition of Architecture*, 1799. Oil on canvas, commissioned for the interior of Thomas Hope's Indian Room. Private collection. Photograph courtesy of Eyre and Hobhouse Ltd., London

avored by the families of those newly returned from India.⁵⁵ Few of the Indian mistresses and wives of East India Company employees, the *bibis*, made it to England: nevertheless the entanglements between Indian and European cultural forms were highlighted in Britain itself by the new styles of dress and constructing the body, and new culinary traditions introduced by the daughters, sisters and wives of the Nabobs.⁵⁶

Following the failure of the Hindostanee Coffee House in 1812, Dean Mahomet moved to the fashionable resort of Brighton and reinvented himself as a shampooing surgeon, opening a bath that eventually enjoyed the patronage of the English monarchs George IV and William IV. In his enterprise, Dean Mahomet drew heavily upon his Indian identity for marketing purposes, adopting Mughal court dress when he appeared in public. The image of India was also central to the creation of an authentically Indian ambience; the walls of the anterooms to the baths were painted with landscapes occupied by temples populated by Indians in native dress, camels, Islamic funerary monuments, and musicians.⁵⁷ The eclectic balance between "Hindu" (or Gentoo) and "Muslim" elements recalls the *Large Composition of Architecture* representing some of the most celebrated Hindoo and Moorish Buildings in India, painted by Thomas Daniell in 1799 for the Indian Room of the collector and author Thomas Hope, in the decoration of which Greek, Egyptian, Turkish, and Indian motifs were synthesized. Daniell's painting depicting the *gopuram* (monumental gateway) of a southern Indian temple adjacent to the Taj Mahal (Fig. 8) was one of four that hung in the room, three Indian scenes and one view of the Roman Forum.⁵⁸ The eclecticism that characterizes these images anticipates the reordering of the Orient through representation that became the hallmark of nineteenth-century Orientalist painting.

While imported paintings and even, more rarely, artifacts, might provide British artists and architects with models,⁵⁹ in most cases it was the work of British artists themselves that proved decisive. William Hodges (active in India between 1780

and 1783) and Thomas and William Daniell (in India between 1786 and 1793) provided the British public with its first extensive corpus of Indian landscapes executed by professional artists.⁶⁰ These artists located their endeavors to bring home images of India within broader projects of exploration and discovery, most obviously those of the geographers, naturalists, and philologists then gathering data and materials from the new worlds that were opening to European eyes.⁶¹

The utility of these “Oriental” images to a burgeoning eclecticism is prefigured in an address delivered to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1785, in which the celebrated Orientalist William Jones expressed the hope that the Indian monuments then being studied by British scholars would “furnish our architects with new ideas of beauty and sublimity,” an undertaking whose dependence upon the “correct delineations” shortly to be produced by British artists underlined the mediating role of these artists and their works in the dissemination of architectural forms.⁶² Jones’s sentiments echo those of Sir Joshua Reynolds in his opening lecture delivered at the Royal Academy in 1778: “The mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continually fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.”⁶³ While Reynolds was thinking of Classical antiquity, his cultural appeal to cross-fertilization was in line with the general momentum of the time. In a speech delivered to the Academy a decade later, Reynolds referred obliquely to the work of William Hodges: “The Barbarick splendour of those Asiatick Buildings, which are now publishing by a member of this Academy, may possibly ... furnish an Architect, not with models to copy, but with hints of composition and general effect, which would not otherwise have occurred.”⁶⁴

The role of contemporary depictions of far-distant lands as vectors of architectural form is illustrated by Thomas Daniell’s involvement with Sezincote House in Gloucestershire, built between 1805 and 1817 (Fig. 9). Designed by Samuel Pepys Cockerell for his brother, the Nabob Sir Charles Cockerell, who had lived for many years in Bengal, the house, its landscape setting, temples, and grottoes were shaped by the architect’s desire to reproduce “authentic” forms with which the Indian drawings and sketches of Daniell had acquainted him.⁶⁵ Thomas Daniell was not only hired as a consultant on the project that his images had informed (thus fulfilling the hopes of Hastings and Reynolds that images of India might inspire British architects), but went on to create seven large oil paintings of Sezincote, which were exhibited at the Royal Academy.⁶⁶ There could be little better illustration of the inherently self-referential character of eighteenth-century “Oriental” representation, or of the visual artifact’s ability to effect the cognitive assimilation and aesthetic appropriation of the East by the West.⁶⁷

As this suggests, the popular aesthetic consumerism of eighteenth-century landscape painting and its domesticating conventions provided the cognitive fil-

ters through which the visual experience of the East was strained.⁶⁸ The “oriental” images of European artists appeared to offer immediate access to knowledge about distant lands, but their reception in eighteenth-century Europe was sometimes characterized by ambivalence. In contemporary caricatures, this ambivalence is articulated around parodies of the optical devices deployed to imbue the representation of geographically and temporally distant scenes with the authority of scientific objectivity.⁶⁹

Despite this ambivalence, the aspiration towards documentary precision, and the perceived “universality of a European episteme” that underlies it,⁷⁰ is related to a contentious issue concerning the extent and nature of the epistemological ruptures wrought by the advent of European rule (in its mercantile or political forms) over large parts of the Orient in the later eighteenth century. Assumptions regarding the totality of the rupture occasioned by these developments have recently been challenged by scholars who have sought to highlight the role of indigenous scribes and scholars in the European documentary enterprise of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, not only as translators but also as agents in the formation of epistemological frameworks informed by skills acquired in the service of pre-colonial rulers.⁷¹ In addition, as the articles in this volume suggest, the *habitus* of some European artists or patrons engaged in the representation of India or the Ottoman Empire to European audiences was sometimes informed by the conventions of both European and Mughal or Ottoman imperial or sub-imperial painting.⁷²

These entanglements, which were reflected in other aspects of contemporary cultural life, sometimes attracted criticism. Angst about the remarkable permeability and porosity of English and Indian elite culture in the late eighteenth century peaked around the ambiguous relationship between the state and *de facto* mercantile governance of the East India Company, coming to a head between 1788 and 1795 in the celebrated impeachment proceedings against Warren Hastings, the former governor-general of the Company.⁷³ In India, the backlash was manifest in the attempt to regulate the relationships between Indians and Europeans and the self-representations of the latter. During the governor-generalship of Lord Cornwallis (1786–93), for example, legislation was passed to prohibit the public wearing of Indian dress by employees of the East India Company.⁷⁴

Despite these concerns, the reception of “Oriental” forms in Britain continued unabated. In their designs for the Brighton Pavilion (1808), the royal architects Humphrey Repton and John Nash drew upon the Daniells’ Indian scenes, declaring Thomas Daniell’s *Oriental Scenery* (1795–1808) depicting Mughal architecture in serene landscapes as “a new source of richness and variety” in contrast to other styles that were also available but considered inappropriate for the purpose. By contrast, Repton asserted that “the Turkish was objectionable as being a corruption of



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9

Samuel Pepys Cockerell, Sezincote House, Gloucestershire, 1805–17. Photograph courtesy of Edward Peake

the Grecian; the Moorish as a bad model of the Gothic; the Egyptian as too cumbersome for the character of a villa; the Chinese as too light and trifling for the outside, however it might be applied to the interior.” Displaying a promiscuous understanding of Hindustani architecture, he drew instead upon the architecture of “Hindustan, Gentoo, Chinese, or Turkish; which latter is a mixture of the other three.”⁷⁵

Similarly, the hostility of some eighteenth-century observers to Oriental, especially Chinese sources (as expressed by Hogarth, see above), did little to impede their appropriation. William Chambers, later professor of architecture at the Royal Academy, travelled to the Far East in the 1740s and wrote about the Chinese manner of gardening with a view to introducing it into Britain. In the 1772 extended version of his *Designs of Chinese Buildings* (1757) he staged an attack on the contemporary practices of landscape architecture:

There are indeed very few [gardens] in our part of the globe wherein nature has been improved to the best advantage, or art employed with the greatest judgement. The gardens of Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and of all the other countries where the antient style still prevails, are in general mere cities of verdure; ... In England, where this antient style is held in detestation, and where, in opposition to the rest of Europe, a new manner is universally adopted, in which no appearance of art is tolerated, our gardens differ very little from common fields.⁷⁶

Chambers’ criticism not only glorified oriental manners of gardening, but also contributed to the already highly politicized practice of landscape architecture. Kew Gardens, where he was employed as a young architect in 1749, had become



10

10

E. Rooker, after Wm. Marlow, *A view of the wilderness, with the Alhambra, the Pagoda and the Mosque*. Folio 127 from Sir William Chambers, *Plans, elevations, sections, and perspective views of the gardens and buildings at Kew, in Surrey: the seat of Her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales*. London: J. Haberkorn, 1763. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

a key locus of the British imperial vision by 1762. There, Chambers designed and built oriental-style buildings including a “Pagoda,” a “Turkish Mosque” and an “Alhambra Temple” alongside the Classical and Gothic temples (Fig. 10).

It was not a coincidence that the “Mosque” appeared in an imperial garden. Ottoman architecture had already been embraced in Europe as a mark of imperial prowess for the first time in France in the late 1730s. Stanislas Leszczyński, the deposed king of Poland who later became the father-in-law to Louis XV, commissioned kiosks, the smallest residential pavilion-type structure of the Ottoman palace, at Luneville in his newly acquired Duchy of Lorraine and Bar.⁷⁷ Despite its humble status as a garden structure, William Chambers’s “Turkish Mosque” of 1762 not only marked the coronation of George III, but also came at a momentous time. Just a few years before the appearance of the Kew mosque, the radical Swiss thinker, Claude Adrien Helvétius, staged an attack on European hypocrisy towards religious tolerance by drawing a distinction between the Ottomans and the French.⁷⁸ His *De l’esprit*, a polemic against Montesquieu’s *De l’esprit des lois*, published in 1758, contained a long footnote that concluded: “we see churches in Constantinople but there are no mosques in Paris.”⁷⁹ Although the construction of a functioning mosque was still too far from both the needs and the possibilities of the age, the “Mosque” at Kew helped pave the way towards envisioning a multi-denominational British Empire.⁸⁰

Stanislas’s kiosks and Chambers’s mosque had a wide appeal in Europe associated with the new fashion for the *jardin-anglais*, which provided another platform for the circulation of Eastern images and forms. Work on Frederick the Great’s famous Chinese tea house at Sans Souci in Potsdam began in 1755 after Stanislas had presented him with a copy of the *Recueil des plans, élévations, et coupes tant géométrales qu’en perspective des châteaux, jardins, et dépendances que le Roy de Pologne*

occupe en Lorraine (1750–53). A similar trajectory of knowledge and ideas—a second-hand exoticism as it were—also took place with regards to Kew and its “Mosque.” Inspired in part by Kew, in 1777 the last of the Holy Roman Emperors, Karl Theodor, erected a mosque at Schloss Schwetzingen in Germany that also incorporated features derived from the two new imperial mosques of Istanbul, the Nuruosmaniye (Fig. 11) and the Laleli, built between 1755 and 1763.⁸¹

The appropriation of these imperial forms in the orientalizing architecture of Europe allows us to address an imbalance in the framing of the eighteenth century in which the receptivity of Eastern elites to European cultural forms is represented as the paradigm, despite the reciprocal nature of contemporary architectural exchange. The phenomenon is perhaps best illustrated by *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, a work by the Princeton Islamicist and White House advisor Bernard Lewis, which purports to explain why Middle Eastern civilizations lag behind the West. Discussing the Nuruosmaniye Mosque, Lewis notes its “Italian Baroque” exterior decoration, concluding that, “When a foreign influence appears in something as central to a culture as an imperial foundation and a cathedral-mosque, there is clearly some faltering of cultural self-confidence.”⁸² This evaluation not only ignores the contemporary receptivity to Ottoman and Indian forms in the imperial courts of Europe, but simultaneously privileges the “European” features of the mosque as more noteworthy or significant than any other while reading them as signs of a decline given a negative psychological gloss. Its emphasis on an authenticity anterior to contact with European culture is common to discussions of “Europeanizing” elements in the art and architecture of eighteenth-century Iran and India.⁸³

Recent research on the Nuruosmaniye mosque has demonstrated a significant difference in the contemporary accounts written by its Ottoman viewers and users (who recognized its new style, *nev-tarz*, and celebrated its aesthetic values without emphasizing its Europeanizing elements in particular) and Western European visitors, who, like Lewis, emphasized a derivative relationship to European models.⁸⁴ This new style is characterized by what Shirine Hamadeh has dubbed a *décloisonnement*, “an opening up between different cultural traditions and practices” and “a peculiar flexibility in the reception and interpretation of new forms, tastes, and aesthetics, be they foreign to imperial culture or to the Ottoman tradition at large” that marked not only architecture, but also literature, music, painting, and contemporary sartorial codes.⁸⁵ These forms were not confined to those then in vogue in Europe (most obviously those associated with the contemporary rococo style),⁸⁶ but also included Persian and late Mughal models.⁸⁷

The period coincides with the proliferation of *turqueries* in the European courts, a coincidence that calls into question the equation between transculturation and



11

11

Nuruosmaniye Mosque, Istanbul,
1748–55. Photograph © Cemal
Emden

decline while highlighting discrepant readings of the reception of European forms in the Orient by comparison with the orientalizing tendencies of contemporary European elites. This discrepancy in perspective reminds us that although Europe has usually been seen as central to the history of global circulations in the eighteenth century, the mercantile cosmopolitanism fostered by burgeoning European adventurism found its counterpart in the imperial cosmopolitanism of the Ottoman Empire or contemporary Indian regional courts. Consequently, there were numerous trajectories to which Europe was irrelevant. Cases in point include the importation of Chinese ceramics to Ottoman Turkey, the incorporation of elements inspired by the Mughal and Safavid architecture of India and Iran alongside those of European inspiration in the architecture of eighteenth-century Istanbul, or the contemporary reception of Ottoman architectural forms in Syria, Yemen, and Egypt.⁸⁸

The reception of Ottoman imperial forms outside the capital could be marked by an eclecticism of another sort, in which contemporary Ottoman styles were inflected by regional architectural traditions and political agendas. A *sabil-kuttab* (fountain/library/school complex) founded by Sultan Mahmud I in Cairo in 1750, one of very few imperial projects undertaken in the city during the eighteenth century, is a case in point. The *sabil-kuttab* demonstrates the importation (or imposition) of Istanbuli modes and materials (some of them the products of artisans drafted in from the Ottoman capital), but also the integration of elements derived from a local neo-Mamluk style. This was characterized by a selective revival and reinvestment of modes of decoration associated with the patronage of the Mamluk

sultans, who ruled over Egypt in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, profiting from long-distance trade with Europe, Turkey, and India. The neo-Mamluk revival can be associated with the patronage of ‘Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda (1715–76), an officer in the Janissary corps and remnant of the old Mamluk order displaced by the Ottoman conquest in 1517. ‘Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda embarked on an ambitious program of architectural patronage, which included the restoration of venerable mosques and shrines and the construction of thirty new monuments, among them mosques, *sabils*, *khanqahs* (Sufi lodges), and bridges.⁸⁹

A second example of Ottoman imperial patronage in Cairo, the *sabil-kuttab* of Sultan Mustafa III (1758–60), underlines the role of Istanbul as a nexus for the mediation of European forms, idioms, and materials. The rich decoration of the building’s interior included more than two thousand six hundred Dutch blue-and-white tiles (probably from Rotterdam), apparently forwarded from Istanbul for the project, whether or not they had originally been acquired for it. The use of Dutch tiles reflects a shift in taste at the Ottoman court around 1750, an engagement with contemporary European modes of interior decoration apparently informed by the circulation of both publications and Ottoman subjects.⁹⁰

If the Ottomans could act as mediators of Dutch style in the eastern Mediterranean, in regions further east during the same period, Dutch traders sometimes actively promoted the circulation of images and media that owed little to European traditions. In their contribution to this volume, for example, Anton Schweizer and Avinoam Shalem draw attention to an astonishing eighteenth-century Japanese lacquer plaque depicting the Haram at Mecca, the holiest city in Islam, commissioned by the Dutch, possibly for presentation to the Muslim sultan of Djakarta. The plaque is one of a number of objects that have been identified as belonging to Baron van Reede (1757–1802), the chief merchant and representative of the Ver-eenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (Dutch East Indies Company), at Dejima on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu. Made by Japanese craftsman but based on a Dutch representation of the Masjid al-Haram found in *De Religione Mohammedica* by Hadrianus Relandus, published in Utrecht in 1705, the plaque illustrates the mediating potential of transcultural objects and their value to the “global” ambitions of contemporary mercantile imperialism. Its purpose may have been two-fold: the cultivation of local artisans, techniques, and culture to gain trading privileges in regions such as Japan normally kept off-limits to European merchants, and the negotiation of similar privileges with the Muslim rulers of the regions that today comprise Indonesia.

Chanchal Dadlani’s article brings to light another example of European artistic patronage in Asia, in this case an impressive and neglected album of Mughal architectural depictions entitled *Palais Indiens*, which includes images of forts,

mosques, mausolea, and palaces. The album was commissioned by Jean-Baptiste Gentil (1726–99), a French military officer serving for the Compagnie des Indes Orientales (French East India Company), but produced by Mughal artists at the court of the Nawab Shuja' al-Daula (r. 1753–75) in the Awadhi capital of Faizabad. Through a close examination of the album and its relationship to Mughal imperial manuscripts, Dadlani argues that the heterogeneous character of the album reflects both the artistic milieu of Faizabad at the time and the Awadhi sense of history, which Gentil saw himself to be a part of by virtue of his marriage to a woman of Mughal descent.

The artistic patronage of the Dutch in Japan and of the French in India, and the florescence of the neo-Mamluk style in Cairo around the middle of the eighteenth century, share a common basis in contemporary global economics. This facilitated not only the mobility of artistic concepts, forms, media, and techniques, but also an expansion in the economic base of contemporary artistic patronage. Between 1740 and 1770, for example, Cairo enjoyed a period of prosperity and demographic growth, a development directly linked to the economic benefits that the Janissaries (including 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda) derived from the international coffee trade and their control over the Red Sea routes that it plied.⁹¹

Perhaps nothing highlights the intersecting networks of eighteenth-century cultural and mercantile exchange better than the burgeoning of this coffee culture in the Middle East and Europe through the course of the century.⁹² During the apogee of the coffee boom between 1670 and 1770, the European coffee trade was mediated by Istanbul (Fig. 12) and Cairo, which bought half the coffee crop from Yemen for distribution to both Istanbul and Europe, and in which more than sixty coffee caravanserais existed.⁹³ During the same period, Dutch coffee merchants maintained emporia at Mocha on the Red Sea coast of Yemen. The economic ramifications of this trade profoundly influenced both the circulation of cultural forms and their potential to circulate. Indeed, the case of coffee might be seen as paradigmatic of the eighteenth-century mobility that the essays in this volume highlight. The culture of coffee constituted a *lingua franca*, a nexus between entrepreneurs in Europe (including the Indian immigrant, Dean Mahomet), Montesquieu's Persians, Dutch and Ottoman merchants, Egyptian Janissaries, Yemeni growers, and consumers scattered from Cork to Isfahan.⁹⁴ Coffee culture was notable not only as a nexus between consumer desires, mercantile ambitions, and specific forms of architecture or architectural patronage, but also for its role in enhancing and promoting certain sorts of sociability and social discourse that were intrinsic to the emergence of what Habermas famously identified as the public sphere, a development crucial to the articulation of modernity itself.⁹⁵ This is not to attribute the emergence of European modernity to the circulation and availability of Eastern



12

12

Gérard Scotin, after Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, *Vendeur de café*. Plate 56 from *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes Nations du Levant*, 1714–15. Paris: Le Hay & Duchange. Photograph © BnF

commodities, but to point out what is rarely acknowledged: although modernity is often seen both as an idiosyncratically European phenomenon and as *sui generis*, many of its characteristic features are neither unique to Europe, nor inseparable from more extensive (and not always peaceful) histories of transregional contact and circulation.⁹⁶

Conclusion

In many ways, the eighteenth century can be considered a turning point in the history of encounters between Europe, the Islamic world, and South and East Asia, characterized both by the popularization of the “Orient” in European art and literature, and of the “Occident” in Ottoman, Iranian, Indian, and Chinese elite cultures. The circulation of images was integral to this process. Like Montesquieu’s fictive Persians (themselves inspired by contemporary Eastern visitors to Paris) and the “Indian” images that served as models for the Orientalizing architecture of the British elite, much of the Oriental and Occidental imagery of the period entailed a double mirroring: a self reflected in an Oriental/Occidental mirror that was itself a construction, a frame within which to articulate critiques of self or other.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the slippage between projection and reflection should not obscure the period’s centrality to the later emergence of disciplinary modes of Orientalist representation. As Said suggested, despite differences from the rigidities of nineteenth-century Orientalist representation, the eighteenth century laid the ground

for their advent. In his analysis, Said identifies four elements in eighteenth-century European representations of the Orient that he sees as essential to the subsequent intellectual and institutional development of modern Orientalism: expansion (mercantile, military, and scientific), comparison, sympathetic identification, and classification.⁹⁸ The paradoxical quality that Said's diachronic analysis brings to light—flexible engagement as a prelude to rigid taxonomy—is central to the essays that follow.

The essays, in various ways, examine the existence of one culture in another as indicative of a dialogical co-existence, in which forms and practices with diverse geographic origins meet and can, therefore, be grasped simultaneously.⁹⁹ They are concerned with the questions of why and with what practical consequences “East” and “West” turned to each other for cultural inspiration during this period. The aim is not to propose an all-encompassing theory of culture contact. Rather, the hope is to draw attention to the intensity and multi-directionality of “global” cultural flows during the eighteenth century, to the ways in which their complexities destabilize any simple dichotomous model of cultural exchange, and to their difference from (and legacy to) those that marked the nineteenth century.

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NOTES

- 1 The literature is extensive, but notable amongst it are Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Zeynep Celik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); Roger Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa, 1880–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Mary Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Travel Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).
- 2 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 117.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 118–19.
- 4 Oleg Grabar, "A Preliminary Note on Two 18th Century Representations of Mekka and Medina," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 268–74.
- 5 John MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (London: Overlook Hardcover, 2006); Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Seattle Press, 2007). Many of these ripostes to Said fail to distinguish between intention and reception, a distinction crucial to understanding the politics of the visual in the era of European colonialism.
- 6 Linda Klinger and Julian Raby, "Barbarossa and Sinan: A Portrait of Two Ottoman Corsairs from the Collection of Paolo Giovio," in *Venezia e l'Oriente Vicino*, Atti del primo congresso internazionale sull'arte Islamica, 9–12 dicembre 1986 (Venice: Università Ca' Foscari, 1989); Gülru Necipoglu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 401–27; Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000); Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Rosamund Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). See, more recently, Stefano Carboni and Jean-Claude Hocquet, eds., *Venice and the Islamic World 828–1797* (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press, 2007).
- 7 See, for example, Shirine Hamadeh's comments on eighteenth-century Ottoman architecture as falling "between the cracks of sixteenth-century classicism and nineteenth-century modernization": *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2007), 4. A rising interest in this period is reflected in some recent exhibitions and publications, among them Layla S. Diba, "Persian Painting in the Eighteenth Century: Tradition and Transmission," *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 147–60; Ülkü Ü. Bates, *Re-orientations: Islamic Art and the West in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Bertha & Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, Hunter College, 2008).
- 8 Philip Lawson and Jim Phillips, "Our Execrable Banditti': Perceptions of Nabobs in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain," *Albion* 16, no. 3 (1984): 225–41;

- August Boppe, *Les peintres du Bosphore au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: ACR Édition, 1989); Maria Elisabeth Pope, "Turquerie im 18. Jahrhundert und der 'Receuil Ferriol,'" in *Europa und der Orient 800–1900*, ed. Gereon Sievernich and Hendrick Budde (Berlin: Bertelsmann Lexikon, 1989), 305–19; David Solkin, "Mortimer's Banditti and the Anxieties of Empire," in *Art and the British Empire*, ed. Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 120–38.
- 9 For a detailed account of the book see Thomas D. Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World: A Study of Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi and Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Americana* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990).
- 10 Carter V. Findley, "Presenting the Ottomans to Europe: Mouradgea d'Ohsson and the *Tableau général de l'empire ottoman*," Gunner Jarring lecture delivered to the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2002, text available at <http://www.srii.org/admin/filer/FINDLEY.pdf>. See also Sture Theolin et al., *The Torch of the Empire: Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson and the Tableau Général of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Kültür, 2002).
- 11 Grabar, "A Preliminary Note," 272.
- 12 Abbé Le Mascrier's *Description de l'Égypte* (1735) preceded Napoléon's project by several decades, but in terms of its ambition and scope, belonged to a different era. On the Napoleonic *Description* and its relationship to Enlightenment epistemology see Anne Godlewski, "Map, Text, and Image. The Mentality of Enlightened Conquerors: A New Look at the *Description de l'Égypte*," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, n.s. 20 (1995): 5–28.
- 13 After the publication of the first two volumes, Tosunyan received the Order of the Vasa, an order reinstituted by Gustav, and took the name Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson.
- 14 For an analysis of the text see Michael H. Fisher, "Representations of India, the English East Indian Company, and Self by an Eighteenth-Century Indian Emigrant to Britain," *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 4 (1998): 891–911.
- 15 Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 59–61.
- 16 Michael H. Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759–1851) in India, Ireland, and England* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 240.
- 17 For an account of all three Persian travelogues see Simon Digby, "An Eighteenth-Century Narrative of a Journey from Bengal to England: Munshi Ismā'il's New History," in *Urdu and Muslim South Asia: Studies in Honour of Ralph Russell*, ed. Christopher Shackle (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989), 48–65, esp. 57. Interestingly, an Ottoman visitor to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London also experienced a similar kind of disorientation. See Anon., *Seyahatname-i Londra* (Istanbul: 1851), 9.
- 18 Juan R.I. Cole, "Invisible Occidentalism: Eighteenth-Century Indo-Persian Constructions of the West," *Iranian Studies* 25, nos. 3–4 (1992): 3–16, esp. 11.
- 19 Ibid., 12–13. Joan Delplato, "An English 'Feminist' in the Turkish Harem: A Portrait of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," in *Eighteenth-Century Women and the Arts*, ed. Frederick M. Keener and Susan E. Lorsch (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 163–78.
- 20 The literature on Lady Mary is vast. For information on her life and writings, see Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- 21 Tillmann W. Nechtman, "Nabobinas: Luxury, Gender, and the Sexual Politics of British Imperialism in India in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Women's History* 18, no. 4 (2006), 11. See also Nebahat Avcioğlu, "Stanislas en Grand Seigneur, ou le Turban et la Couronne," *Turqueries et autres chinoiseries: L'Exotisme en Lorraine au XVIII^e siècle*, exhibition catalogue (Lunéville: Château de Lunéville, 2009), 20–26.
- 22 Jonathan Richardson, *The Works* (London: T. Davies, 1773), 7.
- 23 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M--y W--y M---e: written during her travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, ... A new edition. The four volumes complete in one* (London: printed for the bookseller, 1794), 18.
- 24 Gül İrepağlu, *Levni, Nakis, Siir, Renk* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1999). Also published as *Levni: Painting, Poetry, Colour* (Istanbul: Society of Friends of Topkapi Palace Museum, 1999).
- 25 Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville, "Mémoires où il est question de la peinture des Turcs & des Persans, de la façon dont les Turcs meublent leurs apartemens, & principalement de la richesse des apartemens du Sérail du grand-seigneur," *Mercure de France* (April 1721): 27–8. For the full French citation, see Kristel Smentek's essay in this volume, note 71. We thank Kristel Smentek for bringing this reference to our attention.
- 26 Banu Mahir, *Osmanlı Minyatür Sanatı* (Istanbul: Kabalcı Yayınevi, 2004), 76–82.
- 27 Karin Adahl, ed., *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed*

- IV in 1657–1658 and the Ralamb Paintings (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 2007).
- 28 Natasha Eaton, “Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750–1793,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 2 (2006): 250 n. 72. See Richardson’s drawing “Three Figures in a Turkish Coffee House,” Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints & Drawings Study Room, level D, case 87, shelf SC, box 32.
- 29 Mildred Archer, “The British as Collectors and Patrons in India, 1760–1830,” in *Treasures from India: The Clive Collection at Powis Castle* (London: The National Trust, 1987), 9–17. See also Natasha Eaton, “Johann Zoffany in India,” in *The History of British Art*, 3 vols., ed. David Bindman (London and New Haven: Tate and Yale Center for British Art), 2008, vol. 2, 118–21.
- 30 On Polier see Muzaffar Alam and Seema Alavi, *A European Experience of the Mughal Orient: The Ijaz-i-arsalani (Persian Letters 1773–1779) of Antoine-Louis Henri Polier* (New Delhi, 2001).
- 31 Ebba Koch, “The ‘Moghuleries’ of the Millionenzimmer, Schönbrunn Palace, Vienna,” in *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, ed. Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge, and Andrew Topsfield (London: Victoria & Albert Museum; Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2004), 152–67.
- 32 Natasha Eaton, “The Art of Colonial Despotism: Portraits, Politics, and Empire in South India, 1750–1795,” *Cultural Critique* 70 (2008), 63–93. For the general background see Jamal Malik, *Perspectives of Mutual Encounter in South Asian History, 1760–1860* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).
- 33 Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Paul Mellon Center for Studies in British Art, 1993), 146.
- 34 William Hogarth, *The analysis of beauty. Written with a view of fixing the fluctuating ideas of taste* (London: J. Reeves, 1753), 45.
- 35 *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes Nations du Levant tirées sur les Tableaux peints d’après Nature en 1707 et 1708 par les Ordres de M. de Ferriol... et gravées en 1712 et 1713 par les soins de M. Le Hay. Explication des cent estampes... Paris, 1714–15, rapportant principalement aux mœurs et costumes de Turquie ont été gravées d’après les tableaux de Jean-Baptiste Van Mour, peintre ordinaire du Roi au Levant* (Paris: Le Hay and Duchange, 1714–15). See also Eveline Sint Nicolaas et al., *Jean-Baptiste Vanmour: An Eyewitness of the Tulip Era* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 2003).
- 36 Perrin Stein, “Madame de Pompadour and the Harem Imagery at Bellevue,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 123, no. 6 (1994): 32–3.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 34–7; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Cabinet des Estampes, Od 6 40.
- 38 Stein, “Madame de Pompadour,” 33–7. A similar formula was employed for a later royal favorite, Madame du Barry: Perrin Stein, “Amédée Van Loo’s *Costume turc: The French Sultana*,” *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 3 (1996): 418–38.
- 39 Inge E. Boer, “This Is Not the Orient: Theory and Postcolonial Practices,” in *The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis*, ed. Mieke Bal and Inge E. Boer (New York: Continuum, 1994), 212–14; Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 88; Inge E. Boer, “Just a Fashion? Cultural Cross-Dressing and the Dynamics of Cross-Cultural Representations,” *Fashion Theory* 6, no. 4 (2002): 423–4.
- 40 Boer, “This is not the Orient,” 213.
- 41 See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 86, 90.
- 42 Anon., “Liotard,” *Magasin Pittoresque* 14 (March, 1846), 89.
- 43 P. Nicklas, “Letters of the Self: Otherness and Epistolary Writing in Giovanni Paolo Marana’s (1642–93) *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*,” in *Narrative Strategies in Early English Fiction*, ed. W. Götschacher and H. Klein (Salzburg and Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 353–65. See also Joseph Tucker, “The Turkish Spy and its French Background,” in *Revue de Littérature Comparée* 32 (1958), 79; Ahmad Gunny, *Images of Islam in Eighteenth-Century Writings* (London: Grey Seal, 1996), 106–29.
- 44 For a rather Eurocentric perspective on the phenomenon, see Fatma Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 16–17.
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- 46 Charles Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, translated by C. J. Betts, (New York: Penguin Classics, 1993), Letter 30, 83.
- 47 Digby, “An Eighteenth-Century Narrative,” 61.
- 48 Stein, “Madame de Pompadour,” 39, fig. 11; Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell, 1786–1794* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 228; Katie Scott, “Playing Games with Otherness: Watteau’s Chinese Cabinet at the Château de la Muette,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 66 (2003): 189–248.
- 49 Saïd Amir Arjomand, “Coffeehouses, Guilds, and Oriental Despotism: Government and Civil Society in Late

- 17th to Early 18th Century Istanbul and Isfahan, and as seen from Paris and London," *European Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2004): 25.
- 50 John Sweetman, *The Oriental Obsession: Islamic Inspiration in British and American Art and Architecture 1500–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 47.
- 51 *Le paradis des infidels: relation de Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, ambassadeur ottoman en France sous la Régence*, trans J.-C. Galland, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: F. Maspero, 1981); Boppe, *Les peintres du Bosphore*.
- 52 Göçek, *East Encounters West*, 17.
- 53 *Topkapi à Versailles: trésors de la Cour ottomane*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1999), 328–9. For Liotard's portraits see Anne de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard, suivi du catalogue de l'oeuvre dessiné* (Geneva: Musée d'art et d'histoire; Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), cat. no. 61.
- 54 Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English*, 257.
- 55 Nechtmann, "Nabobinas," 9.
- 56 Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia," in *Feminism and History*, ed. Joan Wallach Scott (New York, 1996), 220–25.
- 57 Fisher *The First Indian Author in English*, 273, 281, 294.
- 58 Archer, *Early Views of India*, 227; Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), 119–20; Patrick Conner, "Thomas Hope's 'Composition Picture,' *Burlington Magazine* 124, no. 951 (June 1982): 362–6; G. H. R. Tillotson, "The Indian Picturesque: Images of India in British Landscape Painting, 1780–1880," in *The Raj: India and the British 1600–1947*, ed. C. A. Bayly (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1990), 145–6.
- 59 Nicholas Cooper, "Indian Architecture in England, 1780–1830," *Apollo* 92 (August, 1970): 127–8.
- 60 This was in addition to works executed for Europeans resident in India. In 1788, no fewer than fifteen British artists were documented as living there, while another fourteen had been resident in the preceding two decades: Sir William Foster, "British Artists in India 1760–1820," *The Nineteenth Volume of the Walpole Society* (1930–31): 1–88; Pauline Rohatgi and Pheroza Godrej, *Under the Indian Sun: British Landscape Artists* (Bombay: Marg Publications, ca. 1995).
- 61 M. Archer and R. Lightbown, *India Observed: India As Viewed by British Artists 1760–1860* (London, 1982), 7; Tillotson, "The Indian Picturesque," 146; Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 40.
- 62 Cooper, "Indian Architecture in England," 127.
- 63 Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Seven discourses delivered in the Royal Academy by the President* (London: T. Cadell, 1778), 211. See also Michael Darby, *The Islamic Perspective: An Aspect of British Architecture and Design in the 19th Century* (London: Leighton House Gallery, 1983), 17.
- 64 Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London, 1975), Discourse 13, 242.
- 65 Archer, *Early Views*, 230–31; Conner, *Oriental Architecture*, 120; Raymond Head, *The Indian Style* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 14, 38–43.
- 66 Cooper, "Indian Architecture," 126–7.
- 67 P. J. Marshall, "Taming the Exotic: The British in India in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, ca. 1990), 47, 53, 62; Nicholas B. Dirks, "Guiltless Spoliations: Picturesque Beauty, Colonial Knowledge, and Colin Mackenzie's Survey of India," in *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, ed. Catherine B. Asher and Thomas R. Metcalf (New Delhi: Oxford & IBP, 1994), 217; Tillotson, "Indian Picturesque," 146–7. The phenomenon is related to the domestication of Indian culture in eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian homes, to which visual representation was central: Richard Leppert, "Music, Domestic Life, and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India," in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception*, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 94–5.
- 68 John Whale, "Romantics, Explorers, and Picturesque Travellers," in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770*, ed. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 191.
- 69 Tensions between the perceived aesthetic and documentary value of the image were often framed in terms of a dialectical opposition between artistic translation and transcription: Finbarr Barry Flood, "Correct Delineations and Promiscuous Outlines: Envisioning India at the Trial of Warren Hastings," *Art History* 29, no. 1 (2006): 63–6.
- 70 Jenny Sharpe, "The Violence of Light in the Land of Desire; or, How William Jones Discovered India," *boundary 2*, 20 (Spring, 1993): 35.
- 71 For differing perspectives see Nicholas Dirks, "Colonial Histories and Native Informants: Biography of an Archive," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*,

- ed. Carol Appadurai Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 279–313; and Phillip Wagoner, “Precolonial Intellectuals and the Production of Colonial Knowledge,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 4 (2003): 783–814.
- 72 See Natasha Eaton, “Hodges’s Visual Genealogy for Colonial India, 1780–95,” in *William Hodges 1744–1797: The Art of Exploration*, ed. Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for National Maritime Museum, Greenwich and Yale Center for British Art, 2004), 39, fig. 14; Archer and Lightbown, *India Observed*, 21.
- 73 Siraj Ahmed, “The Theater of the Civilized Self: Edmund Burke and the East India Trials,” *Representations* 78 (Spring, 2002): 28–55; Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); Flood, “Promiscuous Outlines.”
- 74 Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 117, 120, 136.
- 75 Quoted in Edward Malins, “Indian Influences on English Houses and Gardens at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century,” *Garden History* 8, no. 1 (Spring, 1980), 50; Conner, *Oriental Architecture*, 136; Fisher, *The First Indian Author*, 271; Archer, *Early Views*, 232–3.
- 76 Sir William Chambers, *A dissertation on oriental gardening. By Sir William Chambers, ... To which is added, An heroic epistle, in answer to Sir William Chambers*, 11th ed. (London: W. Griffin, 1773), vii–ix.
- 77 For a detailed discussion of these buildings see Nebahat Avcioğlu, “A Palace of One’s Own: Stanislas I’s Kiosks and the Idea of Self-Representation,” *Art Bulletin* 85 (2003): 662–84.
- 78 His book, which was seen as a malicious attack on the Church and the European states, was condemned and burned as soon as it appeared in France. Despite censorship, the English translation had “sold far more copies than any translation” of other radical French books in the 1750s: David Wootton, “Helvétius: From Radical Enlightenment to Revolution,” *Political Theory* 28, no. 3 (2000): 316.
- 79 Claude Adrien Helvétius, *De l’esprit* (Paris, 1759), 114.
- 80 Although there were a number of Muslim captives, travelers, or household servants living in Western Europe, they did not constitute a distinct religious community. In addition, since Islam does not dictate a particular place or shape of a building for worship, these Muslims could pray anywhere. See Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); idem, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, ca. 1999).
- 81 For a discussion of the “Turkish Mosque” at Kew Gardens see Nebahat Avcioğlu, *Turquerie and the Politics of Representation 1728–1876* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, forthcoming).
- 82 Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (London: Phoenix, 2002), 137, 148–9. See also Edward Said’s response: “Impossible Histories: Why the Many Muslims Cannot be Simplified,” *Harper’s Magazine*, July 1, 2002.
- 83 Finbarr Barry Flood, “From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art,” in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth C. Mansfield (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 35–8.
- 84 Shirine Hamadeh, “Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the ‘Inevitable’ Question of Westernization,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (March, 2004): 36–8.
- 85 Hamadeh, *The City’s Pleasures*, 236.
- 86 Günsel Renda, *Batılılaşma Döneminde Türk Resim Sanatı 1700–1850* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1977); idem, “Europe and the Ottomans,” in *Europa und die Kunst des Islam. 15. Bis 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Oleg Grabar and Elisabeth Liskar (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1985), 15–19.
- 87 Noted in Hamadeh, *The City’s Pleasures*, 236, although the subject merits more extensive treatment than it receives there.
- 88 See, for example, Annie-Christine Daskalakis Mathews, “A Room of ‘Splendor and Generosity’ from Ottoman Damascus,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 32 (1997): 111–39; Nancy Um, “Eighteenth-Century Patronage in Sanaa: Building for the New Capital in the Second Century of the Qasimi Imamate,” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 34 (2004): 361–75.
- 89 Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The ‘Abd al-Rahmān Katkhudā Style in 18th Century Cairo,” *Annales Islamologiques* 26 (1992): 117–26. For the *sabil-kuttab* of Mahmud I, see the forthcoming article by the same author.
- 90 Hans Theunissen, “Dutch Tiles in 18th-Century Ottoman Baroque-Rococo Interiors: The Sabil-Kuttab of Sultan Mustafa III in Cairo,” *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 9, no. 3 (2006): 1–38, esp. 32.
- 91 André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1973), 307–73, especially 330–35.
- 92 Nancy Um, *The Merchant Houses of Mocha: Trade and Architecture in an*

Indian Ocean Port (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

- 93 André Raymond, *Le Caire des Janissaires: L'apogée de la ville ottoman sous 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhudâ* (Paris: CNRS, 1995), 55–8.
- 94 Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985); Arjomand, "Coffeehouses, Guilds, and Oriental Despotism," 31.
- 95 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press; Chesham, Combined Academic, 2004), 84.
- 96 Edward Said, "The Politics of Knowledge," *Raritan* (Summer 1991): 21; Andreas Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World," *New German Critique* 34, no.1, 100 (Winter 2007): 192. In related vein see Jonathan Hay, "The Diachronics of Early Qing Visual and Material Culture," in *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, ed. Lynn A. Struve (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 303–34.
- 97 Thierry Hentsch, *Imagining the Orient*, trans. from the French by Fred A. Reed (Montreal: Black Rose, 1992; first published 1987), 113; Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 134–55; Greg M. Thomas, "Yuanming Yuan/Versailles: Intercultural Interactions between Chinese and European Palace Cultures," *Art History* 32, no. 1 (2009): 115–43.
- 98 Said, *Orientalism*, 116–21, esp. 120–21.
- 99 The term "contact zone," coined by Mary Louise Pratt and defined as "social spaces

where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power—such as colonialism and slavery or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today," also provides a possible model for analyzing cultural encounters: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6–7. Transculturation, Pratt suggests, is a feature of the contact zone. Pratt does not define this term, which is borrowed from the anthropologist Fernando Ortiz's work on the sugar and tobacco cultures of post-colonial Cuba. Although Ortiz clearly saw transculturation as a unidirectional process that entailed an initial loss (a "deculturation" that prepares the ground for "neoculturation"), thanks largely to Pratt's work the term has gained currency as denoting the multidirectional nature of exchange: Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. from the Spanish by Harriet de Onís (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 102–3. For the application of "transculturation" to cross-cultural aspects of early modern and European art see Mary D. Sheriff's introduction to *Cultural Contact and the Making of European Art since the Age of Exploration* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

A ROOMFUL OF MIRRORS

The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks, 1550–1700

Abstract

The essay concerns the history of the long-distance circulation of images in the early modern world, and is in other words about the closing of a rather wide circle. It is still our habit when we recount this history to present it essentially as one of a growing European presence in and influence on Asia, Africa, or America (the so-called expansion-and-reaction paradigm), with relatively little attention paid to the other half of the circle. Here the received history of images clearly differs from that of texts and their circulation, which is at the heart of debates on Orientalism. The first part of the essay revisits the familiar problem of the influence of European images on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century India and offers new insights into the processes, actors, and motives involved. The second part then examines the varied modes of reception, refraction, and appropriation of images of and from Mughal India in early modern Europe. We shall see that these varied between ethnographic and courtly, and veered uncertainly (at times playfully) between the logics of the “etic” and the “emic.” These materials are used to refine and reflect on the issue of “incommensurability” between historical cultures and their forms of representation.

You hold the Glass, but turn the Perspective;
And farther off the lessen'd Object drive.
You bid me fear: in that your change I know:
You would prepare me for the coming blow.

JOHN DRYDEN, *AURENG-ZEBE* (1675)¹

Introduction

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a considerable quickening in intercontinental trade and the circulation of humans, other animals, plants, ships, commodities from bullion, guns and pepper to porcelain and furs, and even (some would say especially) microbes. In some instances, the situations in 1500 and 1700 were so radically different that one can qualify the change as truly revolutionary; this is the case with the massive restructuring and even outright destruction of the fabric of pre-Columbian societies on the American continents over that period. In other cases, the pace of change was less dramatic but still appreciable. China and India had already been connected to the western Mediterranean in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the connection was a feeble one, probably comprising a few dozen direct traders and travelers each year, while practically no ships made it from the Mediterranean or the seas west thereof to the Indian Ocean. By 1700, the extent of connection was far greater, and even Japan—reputedly in its “restricted”

(*kaikin* or *sakoku*) phase—continued to maintain contact with Western Europe through the Dutch trading factory in Deshima.² It is still our habit when we recount this history to present it essentially as one of a growing European presence in and influence on Asia (the so-called expansion-and-reaction paradigm), with relatively little attention paid to the closing of the circle. One can see why such a habit of thought persists; in comparison to a rather large number of Europeans in Asian waters, relatively few Asians made it to, say, Portugal or the Netherlands between 1500 and 1700. Fewer still lived to tell the tale, though we may have underestimated the numbers of those who did. One half of the circle is thus drawn perforce in far stronger traits than the other. This is, however, not a reason to ignore the many and interesting ways in which the circle was indeed closed. One of these was arguably through art and visual representation.

In order to further the analysis, a central notion that I intend to draw upon and critique is that of “incommensurability,” rendered famous in the early 1960s by Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend. Kuhn’s principal concern in his initial work was the incommensurability of scientific theories, in which he argued that there was a relation of methodological, observational, and conceptual disparity between paradigms. In a later phase, Kuhn began to argue—using the work of W. V. Quine, albeit with some looseness—that incommensurability was essentially a problem in the semantic sphere, and further proceeded to argue that the fundamental problem was one of the “indeterminacy of translation.” Yet, where Quine had argued that there was an indeterminacy between equally good translations, Kuhn seemed to imply that incommensurability was more an issue of a failure of exact translation; this suggested, first, that correct translation was actually possible in principle, and second, that existing translations were not only indeterminate but also bad.³

The next step chronologically was the transfer of the idea of incommensurability, used first in the context of the relations between two (or more) “paradigms,” to the relation between two or more cultures or forms of representation. This gives us the idea of “cultural incommensurability,” a particular form of cultural relativism through which anthropology came to influence the practice of historians in the late 1980s and 1990s. The view here is of largely impermeable cultural zones, perfectly coherent in and of themselves, but largely inaccessible to those who look in from the outside. To be sure, as Anthony Pagden has forcefully reminded us, the roots of such ideas can be traced back at least to the later eighteenth century, when writers such as Denis Diderot and above all Johann Gottfried Herder produced powerful, and in the case of Herder, rather dangerous, arguments on this subject. For, in Pagden’s words, “Herder pushed the notion of incommensurability to the point where the very concept of a single human genus became, if not impossible to conceive, at least culturally meaningless.”⁴ The implications of ideas

such as these for the study of early modern visual encounters and interactions in an inter-imperial context have, however, largely remained unexplored. In particular, the tension between ideas of incommensurability and agency would merit further investigation. This would require us to focus on well-defined actors and particular actions and processes rather than paint cultural interaction in broad brushstrokes.

The Career of European Images in India

Let us begin with the first half of our notional circle, that which takes us from Europe to India. In the course of about a half-century, between the arrival of the first Jesuit mission in Fatehpur Sikri in 1580 and the death of the emperor Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir in late October 1627, extant literature tells us that a substantial change took place in the artistic relationship between Europeans (*fīrangīs* or Franks) and the painters of the Mughal and other Indian royal and aristocratic ateliers. To state this is by now to state a commonplace. Hundreds, if not thousands, of pages have been devoted to the transformation of Mughal art under European (and in particular Catholic) influence: the brilliant and often startling paintings on biblical themes by Keshav (Kesu) Das and others; the effect on the iconography and self-presentation of the emperors themselves—from depicting themselves backed by haloes to surrounding themselves with cherubs and angels; the use of the symbolism of the globe to literalize the power of the rulers as “world-seizers”; and the use of set-pieces of perspectivized urban and rural landscape to provide the backdrop even to scenes where the content was not noticeably Christian. In the beginning, if conventional historiography may be credited, lay the fascination exercised by the printed book with its woodcuts and engravings, which the Jesuits brought along as part of their portable libraries. Among these, pride of place was taken by the celebrated if unwieldy multi-volume Polyglot Bible, or *Biblia Regia*, printed at Antwerp in twelve hundred copies and large-folio format between 1568 and 1573 by the Flemish printer Christoffel Plantijn (or Christophe Plantin), in collaboration with other scholars, and under the supervision of the Spanish theologian Benito Arias Montano. The Bible, patronized and heavily subsidized by Philip II, contained text in Latin, Hebrew, Greek, and Syriac and also several impressive engravings. Along with this work, the first Jesuits in Sikri—Fathers Acquaviva, Monserrate, and Henriques—also carried another major object produced by an associate of Plantijn, namely Abraham Ortelius’s atlas entitled *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. By the end of his reign, it has been claimed, the emperor Akbar had “amassed an astounding collection of Renaissance visual and literary artifacts,” and these included “a vast number of engravings of the work of artists ranging from Michelangelo, Raphael, and Taddeo Zuccaro to Dürer and Martin

de Vos; oil paintings donated by the great aristocratic families of Rome; and even a Portuguese painter [unnamed].”⁵

The Mughals thus felt the effects of the Renaissance, but also of the Counter-Reformation at its height. To be sure, Plantijn and his larger circle (the so-called Family of Love, which was more-or-less a Nicodemite group) represented a rather moderate view of what Christianity might be in relation to other religions or beliefs, but the same could not always be said of the Jesuits who carried the works printed by his press to India. At any rate, there is little doubt that the Polyglot Bible was given a suitably pomp-filled reception in the Mughal court on its arrival. Here is how that reception is described by an eyewitness, the Catalan Jesuit Antonio Monserrate:

“On the 3rd of March they [the Jesuits] took to the audience chamber a copy of the Holy Bible, written in four languages and bound in seven volumes; this they showed to the King. In the presence of his great nobles and religious leaders Zelaldinus [Jalal-ud-Din Akbar] thereupon most devoutly not only kissed the Bible, but placed it on his head. He then asked in which volume the Gospel was to be found. When he was shown the right volume, he showed yet more marked reverence to it. Then he told the priests to come with their Bible into his own private room, where he opened the volumes once again with great reverence and joy. He shut them up again very carefully, and deposited them in a beautiful bookcase, worthy of such sacred volumes, which stood in the same private room, where he spent a great deal of his spare time.”⁶

This is an attractive and well-plotted version of what seems to be the first Mughal exposure to the European book, but it is not entirely convincing. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the presence of the European book, whether printed or manuscript, in Asia in the years prior to the episode described above. From a scanty bibliography, one learns of how a printing press was sent from Portugal to Ethiopia, but wound up in Goa, where it was first put to use by the Jesuits from late 1556 to produce texts such as the *Conclusões de logica e philosophia* (1556) and the *Doutrina cristã* (1557), both unfortunately now lost to us.⁷ This was somewhat after the first printing press had become operational in Mexico, but preceded the one in Lima. The first printers were apparently Spaniards, a certain Juan Bustamante (also known as João Rodrigues) and another Juan González. In April 1563, another printer’s name—that of the obscure German Johannes von Emden—appears on a very celebrated work from Goa, the *Colóquios dos simples e drogas e cousas medicinais da Índia* by Doutor Garcia da Orta (Fig. 1). By the late decades of the century, experiments had been made in terms of printing text in Tamil (and even to a limited extent Nagari script, for Konkani), with the more successful Tamil texts being printed from the late 1570s onward under the impetus of the energetic Jesuit Henrique Henriques in Cochin and Kollam for use on the Fishery Coast of

Coloquios dos simples, e
 drogas he coufas medicinais da India, e
 alsí dalgũas frutas achadas nella onde se
 tratam algũas coufas tocantes a mediçina,
 pratica, e outras coufas boas, pera saber
 cõpostos pello Doutor garçia dorta : físico
 del Rey nosso senhor, vistos pello muyto
 Reuerendo senhor, ho liçenciado
 Alexos diaz : falcam defenbar-
 gador da casa da supricaçã
 inquisidor nestas
 partes.

Com priuilegio do Conde visó Rey.

Impresso em Goa, por Ioannes
 de endem as x. dias de
 Abril de 1563. annos.

1

1
 Title page of Garcia da Orta's
Colóquios dos simples e drogas
e cousas medicinais da Índia.
 1563. Goa: Johannes von Emden.
 Photograph by the author

southern Tamilnadu.⁸ None of these works attained the sophistication or production quality of the Polyglot Bible, yet they cannot entirely be neglected even if they did not contain elaborate images.

Nor can we lay aside the issue of the circulation of manuscript European books, some undoubtedly with images in them. We have to assume that the crew and priests on the early fleets of Gama, Cabral, and João da Nova must have carried with them such books, usually Christian in character and content. By 1509, when the Portuguese under Dom Francisco de Almeida were fighting a Mamluk fleet off Diu in Gujarat, they claimed to have encountered among the spoils of war "some books in Latin, and in Italian, some for praying and others of history, and even a prayer-book [*livro de orações*] in the Portuguese language."⁹ A few years later, the governor Albuquerque noted that he had at his disposition in Cochín a good number of religious pamphlets that could be used to instruct novices and young converts ("humana arca de cartinhas por omde imysnam os meninos").¹⁰ By the time Goa came to be the focal point of Portuguese operations, about 1530, it is reasonable to suspect that certain small manuscript collections and even private libraries would have been available in that city. Nor can we rule out the possibility of individual Portuguese carrying books around in their wanderings.

A neglected passage from the chronicle of Diogo do Couto provides us with a view of the Mughal encounter with Christian European imagery that precedes by a considerable period the Jesuit presence in the court of Akbar. It appears in a

chapter of the chronicle dealing with the situation in the late 1530s and early 1540s: “Of what happened to Hamau Paxa [Humayun Padshah], king of the Magores after he was defeated by Xirxa [Sher Shah]; and how with the favour of Xa Ismael [Shah Isma‘il, *sic*: for Shah Tahmasp of Iran, r. 1524–76], king of Persia he came back to conquer his kingdoms...” Couto informs us that Humayun when on his way into exile in Iran was a protagonist of the following rather curious incident:

“On this voyage [*jornada*], there was a Portuguese by name Cosmo Correa, a settler [*cazado*] from Chaul with a wife and children (who is still alive) who, since he had assaulted a [Crown] Factor fled to Cambay and from there passed to the court of the Magor, who used to give a good account of this voyage, because he was a well-informed man and on that account the Magor was well-inclined towards him. And he used to recount many things about him [Humayun], amongst which he used to say that when he was talking with him one day, he [Humayun] asked him to show the book using which he prayed and that he [Correa] brought him the [Book of] Hours of Our Lady (which had a binding illuminated in the old style in quarto), and on opening it the King fell at once on the beginning of the seven Psalms, where there was an illumination of the story of David and Bathsheba.¹¹ And the king looking at it carefully, said to Cosmo Correa: ‘What will you give me if I guess [the content of] these stories?’ Cosmo Correa responded to him: what did he possess to give to such a great monarch? ‘Give me your lance,’ said the Magor (for it was one from Portugal), ‘and if [I do] not [guess it] I will give you the head of a wild boar which I will kill in front of you.’ And with that, he recounted the story to him just as we have it in the Scriptures. And handing the book back to him, he [Humayun] asked that he show him the four men who had written the Law of the Christians, and Cosmo Correa showed him the Evangelists [Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John] who were illuminated in the beginning of the four Passions, which the King looked at carefully and said: ‘Now, you should know something, which is that on many occasions I heard my father Babur Paxa say that if the Law of Muhammad were to suffer a decline, that I should receive no other than that which has been written by four men.’ And thus this barbarian was so fond of Christians that whenever he saw them, he gave them great honours and grants.”¹²

Several aspects of this story are worthy of note. In the first place, we can independently identify the existence of Cosmo Correa from Chaul from state documents of the period.¹³ Second, the account of the discussion around the image is in fact plausible, even though the last section appears to be a characteristic exaggeration. Muslim and Gentile rulers in Asia, if we are to believe the Portuguese, were for ever on the verge of becoming Christian. In fact, very few freely did and a large proportion of those who did apostatized. There is no reason to believe that either Babur or Humayun, however ambiguous their relationship might have been

between Sunnism and Shi'ism, ever really thought of Christianity as an option. Rather, what the anecdote does bring out is the existence of a complex relationship between the books of the Christians and the culture of Muslims such as the Timurids. Humayun obviously liked and patronized painting—though only a few paintings from his atelier such as his “garden party” have survived—and had no aversion at all to the painted image, even the human one.¹⁴ The stories of the Old Testament and its kings and prophets, such as that of David, were a part of a familiar repertory for him. There is thus every reason to believe that in a dull moment during a long and difficult voyage, he might have taken some delight in leafing through a book in an unfamiliar script but with intelligible (and in this instance somewhat erotic) images. The text in question was, as Couto notes, a Book of Hours of Our Lady, or in Latin the *Horæ beate marie virginis*. It is unclear whether the book was manuscript or printed; if printed it must almost certainly have come from a source external to Portugal, such as the busy printing presses of Paris.¹⁵

This is an important point to note, and it is something of a paradox. Christian-oriented imagery in sixteenth-century India was far more of a success than Christianity itself. There were only two broad areas where conversion to Catholicism produced substantial results. The first was Goa, in particular after the mid-century, when temples were destroyed on some scale and a mixture of carrot and stick employed to bring the “Gentiles” within the fold of Christianity.¹⁶ It is possible that in this process, the visual medium played a significant role since some of the churches that were built in the course of the century had more-or-less ambitious pictorial programs, such as the scenes from the *Vida e Martírios de Santa Catarina* painted in Lisbon by Garcia Fernandes for the See church in Goa.¹⁷ The second area was the far south of the peninsula, already referred to as the Fishery Coast. Here, the language of communication was Tamil and the target community was largely restricted to a single low-status caste, the Paravas. The Jesuits in this context devised and printed books in a colloquial register of Tamil, but they are also known to have had paintings on Old and New Testament themes made in Goa and transported to the churches of the Fishery Coast for didactic ends. Far less is known about how the paintings were received and what, if any, effect they had on painting and visual expression in the region itself.

The case is quite different with the Mughals. Gauvin Bailey has noted that after 1580, “Akbar ordered his artists to paint hundreds of iconic portraits of Jesus, Mary, and a panoply of Christian saints in the styles of the late Renaissance to adorn books, albums, jewelry, and even treaties.” Bailey is, however, at some pains to insist that “Catholic devotional art was produced and received [by the Mughals] in a profoundly different manner than in Europe and many of its colonies,” and suggests several possible reasons for the path taken by the Mughals. The first of these, in his

view, lay in the “common Neoplatonic heritage” shared by Sunni Islam as practiced in Mughal India and counter-reformation Christianity. Less plausibly, he claims that “it is quite possible that the Mughals chose Catholic imagery because Islam itself did not provide an iconographic tradition capable of combating the visually potent pantheon of Hindu deities.” In other words, Catholic devotional art could build bridges because it was somehow “culturally neutral”; indeed, the even stronger claim is made that “its realism and immediacy were believed to be universal and allowed it to transcend cultural and ethnic boundaries and embrace the whole of humanity.”¹⁸ Believed by whom to be universal, one is entitled to ask? A discussion with Brahmins reported by François Bernier in Benares in the 1660s is relevant here. Bernier had chosen to mock the Brahmins on their bathing rituals, stating that “in the cold countries it would be impossible to observe their law [on bathing] during the winter, which was a sign that it was a pure human invention.” He reports that they responded as follows: “that they did not claim that their law was universal; that God had made it for them and it was for that reason that they could not receive a foreigner into their religion; that for the rest, they did not claim at all that our [religion] was false; and that it might well be that it was good for us and that God had created different paths to go to heaven, but that they did not wish to accept that our [religion] being valid for all of the earth, theirs was nothing more than a fable and pure invention.”¹⁹ The idea then that what was Catholic was obviously universal, embraced all of humanity, and transcended cultural and ethnic boundaries was thus a perfectly Catholic idea, but not shared by anyone else. The Brahmins, for their part, seem to have been relative relativists, in a Latourian mode.

Fortunately, in the case of the Mughals and Jesuits, we are not obliged to rest our case on inference and speculation alone. The Mughal court has left behind a corpus of documents and narrative materials regarding its perception of the Jesuits and the materials they submitted to the imperial gaze. These do not appear for the most part in the great imperial chronicles in Persian, which barely deign to mention the Jesuit presence at the court on a handful of occasions. Rather, they appear above all in the dispersed writings of a certain ‘Abdus Sattar ibn Qasim Lahauri (fl. 1600–20), whom Edward Maclagan refers to as “a prominent literary man of the day,” and who was in many ways the chief intermediary figure between the Jesuits and the Mughal court in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Sattar had initially been close to the Jesuit Jerónimo Xavier but later had a substantial falling out with the Jesuits over issues of religion. The Jesuits for their part saw him as ungrateful; they claimed that he had been “as poor as Iru” when they first knew him, and had only received an official rank through the intervention of Xavier.²⁰ Sattar was certainly a key participant in debates that took place on Christianity in the early years of the rule of Jahangir, while the emperor was in Agra. By this time, a considerable

corpus of Christian texts had been translated into Persian, largely through the collaboration of Xavier and Sattar. The context for the debates is described as follows by Xavier in one of his letters:

“As the king was resting in Agra, one night his librarian on his orders brought him a great mass of books [*grande multidão de registros*] concerning our saints and other things (which in the previous years he had collected), in order to pass sections of the night looking at them, and through these images we managed this year to do what we had wanted for many years, which is to have a public dispute with the principal people of the king in front of him, regarding matters of our Holy Law and that of the Moors, and these exchanges and disputes went on for a month almost every night, and in order to do this he used to call us close to him [*junto de si*] where usually only the sons of the king and some of his confidants were, and the others were [standing] a bit further off. And since I trust that our dearest brothers would like to hear about this, I will recount in some detail some of the things that happened on some of these nights.”²¹

Xavier's description then rests content with describing the challenges that the Muslim 'ulamā' of the court put to the Jesuits, and suggests that on each occasion, superior Jesuit rhetorical and logical skills prevailed. The optimistic vision of a Mughal court where Christianity is on the verge of making a major breakthrough is preserved in these writings, as it was in the compendia made of them and presented to a larger audience in Europe. This is not at all the image that one receives from Sattar, in particular in his account of the nocturnal meetings of Jahangir's courtiers. This account carries a good deal of credibility on account of the identity of its author. 'Abdus Sattar was the author of *Samrat ul-Falāsifa* (The Fruits of Philosophers), also known as the *Alhwāl-i Firangistān*, a text based on his knowledge of Latin which he had acquired through Jerónimo Xavier. He also collaborated with Xavier on a number of other works, such as a life of Jesus entitled the *Mirāt ul-Quds* (or *Dāstān-i Masīh*, completed in AH 1011) and the *Dāstān-i Alhwāl-i Hawāriyān* or *Waqā'i-i Hawāriyān-i Duāzdaḡāna* (Account of the Twelve Companions), which was completed in AH 1014.²² However, with the passage of time, Sattar had grown increasingly disgruntled with Christians in general and the Jesuits in particular. His position increasingly came to be that while Jesus was indeed a prophet, the work that the Christians claimed was the Gospel (*injil*) was in fact a fabrication. These views, propounded by him in the court with detailed examples taken from his reading of texts in Latin, seem to have been supported by many influential courtiers such as Mirza 'Aziz Koka.

One may take a single discussion in Jahangir's court as it is recounted by 'Abdus Sattar to gain a flavour of the status of Christianity there at the time, a status that is quite at odds with the Jesuit version. We focus here not on the Jesuit participa-

tion in the debate or their attacks on Islam (of which there were several) but on the Mughal side of the argument and their critique of the Christians. The episode took place around June 1610, when Jahangir had just received a gift from the Portuguese of the port of Goa, together with some new Jesuits (*dānāyān-i Farang*), including one—probably the Florentine Francesco Corsi (1573–1635)—who Sattar states was noted for his harsh speech, bigotry (*ta'assub*), and sharp temper. On arriving at the courtly meeting, this Jesuit apparently began to praise his own faith and denigrate Islam despite attempts by some other courtiers to lighten the occasion. Eventually, when he stated that anyone with intelligence would not accept the Muhammadan faith (*dīn-i muhammadi*), the emperor lost his patience a little and asked Sattar to intervene in view of his knowledge of matters Christian. A debate now began with the Jesuit, somewhat contemptuously termed a mere cross-worshipper (*salīb-parast*) here. When he was asked whether he did not believe in prophethood as such (which would make him a *kāfir-i mutlaq*, an unqualified denier), or in the prophethood of Muhammad, he responded that his view was simply that Muhammad was no prophet (*paighambar*). He himself was a Christian (*'Isawī*) and believed in the religion of the Gospel (*dīn-i injīl*). Sattar now responded that he did not believe that the Frank's religion was the religion of Jesus or indeed that his book was the Gospel. He thus felt that he had turned the tables on him.

The debate resumed after an interval, with Sattar attacking the Christians vigorously, declaring that he found their faith the most false (*bātil-tarīn*), the most impure (*najis-tarīn*), and the dirtiest (*ganda-tarīn*). He stated that he found even the faith of Hindus (*dīn-i hunūd*) better than Christianity. The emperor was shocked at this, however, and declared it unreasonable. Sattar responded that after all even the Hindus did not claim that their God had been crucified. Jahangir replied that they might not say that, but the Hindus did have a god who had sported with twelve thousand women on a single day and impregnated them all! Sattar retreated from his position, and said he was willing to concede that if the emperor felt that way, it must be true. But he still could not withdraw his objections to the God of the Christians who had been crucified naked, wearing a crown of thorns, received five thousand lashes, on whose face people had spat and who had been mocked by people. Further, he noted that he was not making this up, but deriving his knowledge from the scriptures of the Christians. The emperor asked the Jesuit padre for a response. The padre said that in their view, God had not been killed. This was a false accusation. Rather, he asserted the simultaneous humanity and divinity of Jesus. Sattar responded that he felt that the padre was simply wasting time. Could he deny what had been said regarding the crucifixion of Christ, the thousands of lashes, the crown of thorns, and the spitting? When the other agreed this was all true, Sattar asked bluntly: was Jesus then God and was God Jesus? The padre responded that he

was. Sattar turned to the emperor and said that it was hence clear that their God had been crucified and had been humiliated. To sum up, Sattar now pointed out that the Frankish wise men (*dānāyān*) claimed that Jesus was both God and Man, just as something can have elements of both white and black. Yet, when it suited them, they denied that it was their God who was humiliated, crucified, and killed.²³

We are not obliged to believe the account by 'Abdus Sattar any more than the letters of the Jesuits. However, several aspects of this narrative sequence, as well as other sections concerning the Jesuits in Sattar's work, are worthy of attention, though the anti-Christian objections raised in the debate are quite banal. First, we see that opposition to and skepticism concerning the Jesuits and their messages were certainly not confined to orthodox '*ulamā*'. Many high courtiers, historians, and intellectuals partook of it and outright rejected both the divinity (as opposed to the prophethood) of Jesus and the veracity of the Christian Gospel. Further, it is clear that this was not based on a lack of exposure to Christian materials but on a progressive exposure to them, as the debates between faiths proceeded apace in a courtly context. Sattar knew the Christian texts, and he knew them well; he was able to quote them and raise minute and even hair-splitting issues. For these reasons, it becomes increasingly difficult to accept the view that Christianity was somehow seen as a distant, neutral, and universal language of communication between different faiths. Rather, it raises another, quite distinct possibility, namely that it was not the narrative content (Christian) of the images that the Jesuits brought with them which accounted for their success, but their formal innovation. Bailey is indeed right to state that the Mughals and their artists "did not necessarily perceive the imagery as Christian," but possibly does not draw the appropriate conclusions therefrom.²⁴

What is of significance for our purposes, rather, is that the Mughal consumption, appropriation, and transformation of European visual representation were not limited to religious (or Christian) themes. It has long been known that geographical representations, both atlases and the globe, were not merely present in the Mughal court but also actively incorporated into Mughal painting; in the course of a discussion Akbar himself is reported by Monserrate to have had "an atlas brought [to see]... where Portugal was, and where his own kingdom."²⁵ A close analysis by Gregory Minissale of the paintings made in Akbar's court to illustrate Nizami Ganjawi's *Khamṣa* from the early 1590s is thus premised on the need "to examine the adoption of the European techniques of *sfumato*, modeling and stereoscopic perspective in the *Khamṣa* illustrations and then to trace the European sources for the motifs of some the key miniatures"; and the author adds that "in this regard, it is necessary also to look at the use of motifs taken from European maps for Mughal background landscapes, which is a subject that has not been [adequately] dealt with

in Mughal art history.”²⁶ Equally, in a recent essay by Sumathi Ramaswamy, it has been noted that while “the terrestrial globe as an object and as representation was only introduced into India in the later years of the sixteenth century . . . it was incorporated within a few decades into the visual productions of the Mughal workshop to generate an aura of grandeur and singularity for the Mughal patrons.”²⁷ It would, moreover, be an error to look constantly for religious roots in Mughal art, as if it is only in the context of a clichéd axis between Sultan and Sufi, or in the alleged ascendance of the spiritual over the temporal, that the production of the imperial or sub-imperial ateliers can be understood. This is precisely where the Jesuit-dominated literature misleads us, as in the case of the celebrated episode reported by Fernão Guerreiro, where the presence of a picture of the Virgin “which was of the height of a man,” copied from that of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome (“uma imagem da Virgem Nossa Senhora, retratada pela de Roma que se chama de Pópulo”), is claimed to have created a tumult in the town. One “great captain” among the Mughals is reported “as soon as he saw the picture [to have] stood as one in a trance, so overcome was he with admiration,” while another high *mansabdār* “gazed on it for a long time in silent wonder [until] presently, tears filled his eyes and began, one by one, to roll down his cheeks.” Eventually, we are told that the Mughal court painters attempted to copy it: “but although the painters put forth their utmost skills, they were fain at last to lay down their implements, acknowledging that such perfection of portraiture was beyond their skill, and that they were unable to compete with the Portuguese in this art [*nem nesta arte se podiam igualar com os portugueses*].”²⁸ The issue, however, is the presentation of the episode in the language of the miraculous and hagiographical, which makes it almost impossible to extricate from the Christian religious sphere. If indeed the painting had been a copy of Annibale Carracci’s recently completed *Assumption of the Virgin* (rather than the Virgin above the altar of the Popolo), we could have placed a rather more mundane construction on the alleged difficulties faced by the artists from the Mughal atelier in reproducing an extremely dense structure replete with human forms and the play of light and shade. But it seems in fact that the painting was instead a copy of the rather archaizing Madonna icon from the same church (brought there by Pope Gregory IX in the thirteenth century, and attributed to St Luke), and the reaction described by the Jesuits can only be deemed somewhat improbable, especially once we have read ‘Abdus Sattar’s counter-narrative, where the very Mughal nobles who were apparently transfixed by this image (like ‘Aziz Koka) consistently make disparaging remarks regarding the Christians.

What lends credibility to the hypothesis that, from the perspective of their Mughal appropriators, the Christian content of the visual materials was quite secondary to their interesting and innovative visual language, is an accumulation of

episodes from the seventeenth century involving European art that did not directly come from the contexts of the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation. The first of these, relatively well-known, concerns a Dutch artist from Haarlem, Cornelis Claesz de Heda (born ca. 1566), who after spending time in a mannerist context at Prague with Rudolf II, found himself in Goa and then in Bijapur under Sultan Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II, where he appears to have died about 1622. Heda arrived in Bijapur around 1610 and has left letters to about 1619; from their contents, it appears quite clear that he was rather well treated at the court and his art much appreciated.²⁹ The travel-narrative of Heinrich von Poser from 1622 notes that about the time he arrived in Bijapur, Heda had just died, leaving behind a beautiful mansion in Nauraspur which was sufficiently magnificent to be given over eventually to the use of the Safavid envoy.³⁰ To the extent that Heda speaks of his experiences as an artist, he notes that the Bijapur ruler's taste ran to classical European painting involving themes such as Venus, Bacchus, and Cupid. While none of his paintings have survived, we see that the Christian content of his art was apparently not of particular interest to his patron.

The same is true from the few cases we can identify of other Dutch artists in South and Southwest Asia in the seventeenth century. Their presence in the Mughal court often proves somewhat elusive to trace, but we can be certain that they existed and that their "naturalism" and "minutely-observed nature studies and psychological portraiture" continued to be incorporated into the painterly vocabulary of the court of Jahangir and Shah Jahan.³¹ Much work needs to be done to track down individual artists in circulation, since we are still dependent to a great extent on the pioneering research of P. A. Leupe in the 1870s.³² In the mid-1620s, we find a certain Jan Lucasz van Hasselt, who Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) sources in Iran report had at that time "already served the King [Shah 'Abbas I] for some years as a painter," and whose paintings in which human figures (*menschelijke figuren*) were depicted were sent by the artist to Surat.³³ In much the same period, one of the Dutch factors in Agra, a certain Hendrik Arentsz Vapoer (d. 1632), is reputed to have been a more-than-competent painter; he appears frequently in the records of the Agra and Surat establishments at the time, and also in association with the well-known Francisco Pelsaert who served as a source to the humanist Johannes de Laet in his account of the Mughal empire, *De imperio magni mogolis*.³⁴ We should note the Mughal request in 1626, late in Jahangir's reign, that they be allowed to send a court painter to Europe on a Dutch ship (with a retinue of five or six others) in order to buy "curiosities"; here, Mughal curiosity was defeated by Dutch obduracy.³⁵ However, Dutch painters and their production clearly continued to be in demand in the Mughal domains. An intriguing, slightly later instance is that of Isaac Koedijck, who in 1651 was apparently recruited as a court painter by

the Mughals but (despite the fact that he might have served as a key informant) was not permitted to leave Surat for Delhi by the VOC's Director, who found it scandalous that a Christian, accompanied moreover by his wife and children, would wish to live in a Muslim court. Koedijck eventually joined the Company, and rose to a position of prominence in the Gujarat establishment in the 1650s, though some other factors complained that he was "more interested in painting than in trade [*niet in de negotie, maar in de schilderkunst*]." ³⁶ Whether his paintings reached the hands of Mughal consumers we do not know, and we can only speculate whether he for his part was interested in the artistic production of western or northern India. Late in Shah Jahan's reign, in January 1657, we are aware that two other Dutch artists were somewhat reluctantly sent by the Surat establishment of the Company to his court; one of these, Jorephas Vos (or Vosch), soon left and can be found serving the VOC as a commander in Trincomalee and Jaffna in the 1660s, while the other—a certain Abraham Emanuelsz van Weteren (from Leiden)—seems to have remained at the court longer and with greater success. ³⁷

We are on firmer ground with other artists, some of whom circulated between the Safavid and Mughal domains. An interesting episode is reported here by the French jeweler and traveler Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, while visiting the Safavid court of Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–66). He writes:

"His Majesty, knowing that I was on the point of departing for India, sent for me to give me several drawings [*desseins*], of which some were from his own hand. For the King had learnt to draw very well from two Dutch painters, one called Angel and the other Lokar, who had been sent to him by the Dutch Company. He had then had wooden models made from all these drawings, of which some were for drinking cups, some for types of plates, and there was one for a dagger. All of this was meant eventually to make enameled gold-work [*orfèvrerie émaillé*] set with stones, and the king had all these models placed in my hands." ³⁸

The idea apparently was that Tavernier would have the jeweled objects made, but he eventually and tactfully refused, fearing that it might cost him over two hundred thousand *écus* which the shah might refuse to pay if his mood or tastes changed. But the two painters in question are clearly identifiable. The second of them was Hendrick Boudewijn van Lockhorst, who was at Isfahan from 1644 to 1647, and was noted there for his high living (*luxurieux ongeboden leven*). The first, rather more celebrated, was Philip (or Philips) Angel (1616–ca. 1684), who despite difficulties with the VOC (on account of his financial misdemeanors and private trade) was nevertheless an important figure of the mid-seventeenth century. Angel was born and trained in Leiden, where he first comes to attention through a text that he presented in public, published in 1642 as *Lof der Schilder-Konst* (In Praise of the Painter's Art). A few years later, in about 1645, he seems to have left for Asia

under straitened financial circumstances as a VOC employee, and spent time in Batavia and Sri Lanka. In 1651 he eventually found his way to Iran, as part of a Dutch embassy sent to the Safavid court under Johan Cunaeus, and remained there for several years, first as a Company employee and then from 1653 as a painter in the court of Isfahan.³⁹ Here, Angel apparently painted, but also taught the young shah and other members of the court artistic skills, before returning to Batavia where he spent some more years, eventually managing to clear himself of the charges mounted against him and serving in a variety of employments. He also produced or perhaps copied a text on the ten *avatāras* of Vishnu, which he dedicated to the governor-general of the Dutch Indies, Carel Hartsinck, whose son he tutored for a time. This text comes accompanied by very curious illustrations, at least some of which seem to be in Angel's hand and to which we shall return briefly below.

By the mid-seventeenth century, the reception and incorporation into Mughal painting of elements of representational techniques with a European provenance can be taken as a given. In one direction at least, there seems to have been little problem with the issue of "incommensurability." While we may find nothing that is identifiable in quite the same way as the *farangī sâz* of Safavid Iran, it takes no more than a cursory examination of a magnificent work like the Windsor Castle *Pādshāhnāma* produced for Shah Jahan to see innumerable elements from Europe that had been taken in, adapted, and transformed. Thus, if one looks to the painting that depicts the Mughal siege of Hugli in 1632, one is quite struck by the portrayal of the European enclave, which is manifestly derived from a European engraving of a cityscape (perhaps in the Flemish tradition) and seems to exist somewhat autonomously of the scene in the foreground involving Mughal boats and cannon.⁴⁰ The purpose of the first section of this essay has not been simply to labor this obvious point of the reception of European elements, techniques, and forms (including in order to depict the Europeans themselves), but to point to how the context for such a reception should not necessarily be seen as a religious one. It is also evident that what emerged was not domination by the European structure; thus, the use of perspective remained limited and almost sequestered within certain sections of Mughal painting, and no great effort was necessarily made to reconcile the landscapes or cityscapes taken from a Dutch engraving with the other compositional features of the painting. In this sense, while European visual representation was received, and even well received, within an Indian and Mughal context, it did not enter it as a conquering and all-powerful visual and painterly vocabulary. Rather, as Ebba Koch sums up the matter, "an artist like Payag could adopt an eclectic approach, which drew upon the whole range of Netherlandish illusionism, from fifteenth-century microscopic naturalism in the manner of Jan van Eyck to the freer techniques of seventeenth-century landscape painting."⁴¹

The Arrival of Indian Images in Europe

We may now wish to close the circle, and look to see how Indian visual representation was received in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. This is seemingly a simple task, but in reality a difficult one. It takes us on the one hand to the formation of the early European collections of Mughal and related art, but on the other hand to the practice of painters and engravers in Europe at the time. A first step in this direction was taken some three decades ago by the Indian art historian Partha Mitter, in a work on “European reactions to Indian art.”⁴² It would appear that in the course of the sixteenth century, no European had really thought to collect visual representations made in India, whether in the world of the Mughals or further south; the ivory casket sent by the king of Kotte in Sri Lanka to Portugal in about 1540 cannot be thought properly to fall into this category and was in any event unsolicited.⁴³ The great intellectuals of the Iberian Renaissance such as João de Barros may have been interested in a certain fashion in Indian textual traditions, but their curiosity did not extend to the world of the visual. Let us recall in this context that the official work of Barros, like the parallel and unofficial work of Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, in fact did not contain any visual materials regarding Asia, and the same was true of the *Décadas* of Diogo do Couto, who lived a good part of his life in Asia and even claimed (with whatever veracity) to have had access to Mughal texts.⁴⁴ During the first three-quarters of the sixteenth century, and practically until the publication of Jan Huyghen van Linschoten’s *Itinerario*, the only major European account that contained visual representations of South Asia was the travel-narrative of the Bolognese voyager Ludovico di Varthema, which notoriously attempted—in the popular German version illustrated by the Augsburg artist Jörg Breu—to perpetuate the monstrous and devilish stereotypes deriving from the European medieval tradition.

To be sure the mid-sixteenth century brought some innovations, but these remained almost exclusively in the manuscript sphere. A prominent example, dating from the 1540s or 1550s, is the so-called Casanatense Codex, a puzzling collection of mixed paintings in an album which may have involved the participation of some painters from western India. The paintings are broadly of two types: one set is ethnographic and depicts typical couples from different parts of the Indian Ocean world between the Cape of Good Hope and China, while the other is focused very largely on scenes of daily life in the Deccan and western India. Some of these works also present scenes of Indian temples, festivals, and religious activities.⁴⁵ The codex and its paintings do not seem to have enjoyed wide circulation and may in fact have been meant—though this is a speculation—as a manual for the edification of novice Catholic priests before they left Rome for India. In style, they are sparse though colorful, and can scarcely be compared to the “high art” of Europe of the mid-six-

teenth century. At the same time, they do not compare easily to the courtly painting one finds in western or northern India in the same period. Obviously intended to be instructive, they stand quite apart from many of the other visual representations we shall survey below. They were never commented upon in the sixteenth century and had to be “rediscovered” by Jesuit scholars in the twentieth century and brought to the attention of modern writers.

They also stand clearly apart from the greater body of visual representations which we can associate with the government of the great intellectual Dom João de Castro. Castro was a fair artist himself, and has left us cityscapes of Goa and Diu, as well as rutters and maritime maps. His time in Asia in the 1540s involved major conflicts with regional sultanates as well as with the Ottomans, and some of these are visually represented in both rich tapestries and watercolor paintings in a classicizing style, where the Ottomans and their allies (such as Khwaja Safar-us-Salmani of Surat) are portrayed much as one might depict Pontius Pilate or the pagan figures of classical antiquity.⁴⁶ Here, we are clearly dealing with the work of European painters who had never been to India or Asia, but simply made use of those exotic landscapes as occasions to set out their wares. This process thus did not in any way take into account how Deccani or fledgling Mughal artists might have portrayed scenes; it did not imagine that the “etic” vocabulary of European depiction had anything to gain or learn from the “emic” vocabulary employed by local painters and artists themselves.

Besides, it is true that while Arabic manuscripts were being collected episodically in Europe in the sixteenth century by the likes of Guillaume Postel, it does not appear that Persian manuscripts from Mughal India found takers in Europe at the time, and they do not appear in the catalogues of the great universities such as Oxford until somewhat later.⁴⁷ To be sure, some traveling savants such as the *mar-rano* Pedro Teixeira had begun to take an interest in translating excerpts of texts such as Mir Khwand’s *Rauzat-us-Safā*, but they seem to have been on the intellectual margins in Europe.⁴⁸ But matters changed from the early years of the seventeenth century, when the first collections of Persian manuscripts began to appear in Europe. One of these is associated with the Scottish Jesuit George Strachan, who traveled extensively in the Arabic-speaking lands as well as Iran, but does not seem ever to have reached the Mughal domains. Strachan’s collections eventually came to Rome.⁴⁹ More adventurous still were the Vecchiotti brothers, whose activities have been studied in recent years by Francis Richard. Richard notes that the two brothers Giambattista (1552–1618) and Gerolamo (1557–ca. 1640) were extensive diplomatic travelers on behalf of the papacy; the older of the two had visited Qazwin, Hurmuz, and Goa in the 1580s. In the early seventeenth century, toward the end of the reign of Akbar, the brothers both visited Agra and made contact with

Jerónimo Xavier and the other Jesuits there. While one of the Vecchietti's principal foci appears to have been texts on Eastern Christianity, they were also particularly interested in materials in Judeo-Persian. Besides these, they also collected a certain number of other manuscripts including texts by Khwandamir, as well as a good variety of works by classical Persian poets such as Nizami, Anwari, Hatifi, 'Umar Khayyam, Shams-i Tabrizi, Jami, and 'Iraqi, some of which seem to have been copied for them in India while others were prepared in Iran, while still others were available on the market for manuscripts.⁵⁰ So far as we are aware, none of these appear to have contained paintings in the Mughal style. Following the Vecchietti in the 1620s, the aristocratic Roman traveler Pietro della Valle (1586–1652) also showed a great deal of interest in Ottoman and Persian literature and came to travel in western India; he too put together a collection of manuscripts but did not show any particular interest in the issue of illustration or in the visual vocabulary of Indian artists of the time.⁵¹

As a consequence, one of the earliest collections of Mughal miniatures in Europe may be found in the Vatican's Barberini Album, which possibly dates from the 1630s.⁵² It typified what were to become seventeenth-century European collections of Mughal Indian art in that it focused largely on the individual portrait and seems to have been in the collection of the Florentine pope Urban VIII (born Maffeo Barberini, died 1644). The album contains sketches, some drafts, and a few complete paintings including one in the form of a genealogical tree with Jahangir at its heart. This tree appears to have been completed sometime in the late 1610s, and Otto Kurz speculated that the original version (to which some features were added) came from "the first months, let us say January–March 1616." A second genealogical tree, with a youngish and still black-bearded Shah Jahan at its center, was begun but left incomplete, and suggests that the album was put together in the early part of his reign, perhaps around 1630. Most of the remaining materials are individual portraits, including a sketch of Shah 'Abbas, which Kurz was inclined to attribute to Bishan Das along with an accomplished portrait of an anonymous young lady whose rich dress and jewelry suggested to the art historian that "she must belong to the imperial harem." The question remains of how the album came to make its way to Italy. Here, again, Kurz's speculation seems sound, namely that such an album should normally never have reached the hands of a collector, being "for the most part sketches, miniatures which were left unfinished, or, in one case, a tracing which has been pricked for transfer." He also suggested, once again plausibly, that "one of the [imperial] painters was persuaded to sell to a European visitor a small parcel of sketches and discarded or unfinished miniatures which no longer served any useful purpose in the imperial studios." We must disagree with him on only one point, when he claims that painting was neglected at Shah Jahan's court in favor of archi-

ecture. However, there is an important further argument to be made. The curiously incomplete character of these drawings and miniatures makes it clear how difficult it was simply to procure such artifacts “on the market.” John D. Gurney, in his study of Della Valle, emphasizes “the problem of purchasing books in the book-shops, their rarity, and the ignorance of those who sold them” already encountered by the Roman traveler.⁵³ Ten years later, matters would not have changed all that much even if—as one strongly suspects—the hand which might have sent the Barberini Album back to Rome was that of a Catholic priest resident in Agra.⁵⁴ While albums with paintings were often evaluated and a price set on them by the Mughals, these were no more than “shadow prices” or subjective evaluations for objects which essentially circulated at this time in the context of a gift- and tribute-economy.⁵⁵ This would begin to change as the seventeenth century drew to a close.

Thus, paradoxically, even as Mughal painters were eagerly laying hands on European engravings and putting them to creative use, European engravers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries do not seem to have had easy access to Mughal visual materials. The solutions adopted are visible in a highly successful text (from a commercial viewpoint) such as Linschoten’s *Itinerario*, where the author almost certainly advised the principal engraver, Jan van Doetechem. In depictions such as those of *banias* and Brahmins, the engraver has full recourse to a classicizing vocabulary, as if he were depicting a biblical scene with muscular, full-bodied human figures, and merely nods in the direction of exoticism through costume. The representation of the “horrible idols” of the temples (“scrickelicke beldenisse der Indiaesche affgoden”) lazily falls back on monstrous stereotypes.⁵⁶ This is a strategy quite similar to that deployed by some of the tapestry makers of the sixteenth century, or by other illustrators and painters who imagined an India they had only seen depicted in words. It would take more than the Barberini Album, sequestered as it was in a private collection, to change this.

The middle decades of the seventeenth century saw just such a sea-change. At roughly the same time that the Barberini Album entered Italy, anonymous hands brought what appears to be the first collection of Indian paintings back to England and presented it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, who in turn made a present of it to the Bodleian Library in 1640.⁵⁷ A certain amount of speculation surrounds this so-called Laud Ragamala, a collection of thirty paintings of two types. Eighteen of the paintings represent various Indian musical modes, *rāgas* and *rāginīs*, here given human form and set in scenes. Thus, for example, one of the first paintings of the collection of Raga Megha Malhar shows the god Krishna embracing and dancing with a woman, while another standing woman plays a double-headed drum to accompany them. The painting is simple enough, and is one of several where this or other gods appear; in many others, solitary women

are depicted. There are also twelve paintings that do not conform to the *rāgamāla* organization, and include some portraits, paintings of birds, and perhaps most intriguingly, a man holding a wine cup and borne on a litter composed of women (on which see below). All of these display a close attention to clothing and costume as well as gesture that would have been valuable to any European engraver. Unfortunately, none seem to have had access to it at the time. We cannot be certain where the paintings were produced or acquired; if we follow Karl Khandalavala, they would have been made in the Deccan about 1625. They must then either have passed through the English East India Company's factory in Surat, or perhaps to its short-lived rival, Courteen's Association. At much the same time, in 1638, Shah Jahan sent an illustrated manuscript produced in Agra in 1629 (with fine calligraphy by Hakim Rukn-ud-Din Mas'ud), the *Gulistān* of Sa'di, as a gift, so the emperor wrote on the flyleaf, to "the seat of the emperor of the kingdom of England [*bādshāh-i mamālik-i inglistān*]." ⁵⁸ The manuscript apparently reached Charles I but then disappeared into the royal collections and was later presented by George IV to the Qajar ruler of Iran in 1827.

The Dutch Synthesis

From the 1640s, vastly greater numbers of Indian paintings began to arrive in Europe, mainly in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, none of these have been preserved as collections, and have instead largely been dispersed or lost. The single most important indicator of their availability comes from the atelier of Rembrandt, who diligently copied a good number of them—certainly at least twenty—probably in the years 1654–6, with pen and brush, and usually on Japanese paper. ⁵⁹ Of these, a few can be traced with confidence, such as a collective portrayal of four elderly Sufi figures seated on a rug under a tree, which is today to be found in the Millionenzimmer of the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna. ⁶⁰ Regarding most of the others, there is some speculation but little certainty, just as it is something of a puzzle as to why the great Dutch artist took such close interest in paintings from a distant horizon. It is also not at all clear where he obtained the Mughal paintings in question. The obvious hypothesis would suggest the VOC's factory in Surat as a source, since the Agra factory was a relatively short-lived affair and the Dutch outposts in the Deccan such as Masulipatnam and Vengurla seem less likely to have had access to Mughal court painting in the years before 1650. It would seem, moreover, that what were purchased were often loose-leaf paintings or albums rather than illustrated manuscripts. As regards Rembrandt's intentions, recent analysts put forward a view that is nuanced and quite complex. Nicola Courtright notes that while he "often enlivened the copies with seemingly spontaneous handling, more naturalistic perspective, and greater spaciousness of setting ... despite these alterations

it is striking how carefully Rembrandt sought to preserve and even enhance precisely what appears to Western eyes as the figural flatness, lack of contrappostal movement, angularity, and rigidity of the originals.”⁶¹ Here, what is referred to is above all the set of portraits, of a standing Jahangir, several of Shah Jahan, as well as of courtly figures typically leaning on canes in a characteristic Mughal posture. If on such occasions, “Rembrandt did not concern himself with exacting particulars” (in Courtright’s words), on others it would seem that “his copies pay homage to the elaborate detail in the miniatures.”⁶² In other words, the painter was probably engaged in a complex inversion of the standard procedures of the engravers and painters of the sixteenth century, who, lacking direct visual ethnographic material to represent India, resorted to quoting from a classical and classicizing vocabulary. Indians in their work emerged looking like Greeks and Romans, swathed in a slightly modified equivalent of togas and tunics, or like figures from biblical scenes, as we saw in Jan van Doetechem’s engravings to accompany Linschoten’s work. In contrast, with Rembrandt we have an attempt to draw on more-or-less contemporary paintings (or at any rate those from the seventeenth century) coming from Mughal India, in order not to paint India itself but to paint classical scenes, even if, as has been noted, there are relatively few blatant “quotations” from the miniatures. The one major exception, art historians suggest, is provided by the Mughal painting of the four great Sufi masters that clearly served as a compositional prototype for one of Rembrandt’s etchings, entitled *Abraham Entertaining the Angels*. We can thus conclude that if, at times, details of a headdress were taken directly from a costume-book or miniature, at others figures in biblical scenes were made by Rembrandt (as his contemporary Philip Angel approvingly noted) to sit or recline “in the manner which is still in use in the lands of the Turks.”⁶³ In sum, the miniatures were apparently intended to provide the master with both concrete material and minutiae, and a broader access to an “archaic plain style [that] had in it a kind of authentic religiosity”; so that in Courtright’s terms, Rembrandt “may have regarded the contemporary Mughal illuminations as precious evidence about biblical antiquity that had survived to the present time.”⁶⁴

It is thus clear that Mughal India was seen in the seventeenth-century Netherlands as quite distinct from, say, Pernambuco in Brazil, where artists like Frans Post and Albert Eckhout had accompanied the expedition of Johan Maurits of Nassau in the 1630s and 1640s, and painted both nature and social life in a style that was eminently located within the norms of Dutch realism, even if the content was exotic and the purpose deeply exoticist.⁶⁵ Few paintings that are quite in the category of Post or Eckhout can be found for seventeenth-century Mughal India, despite the fact—as we have noted—that a good number of Dutch painters found their way there. If such images had been executed, we can hardly see them serving the pur-

poses that Rembrandt had in mind, namely being “precious evidence” of any sort. The Mughal tradition of painting provided a vision from within Indian society, a vision not only of what it was but of how it was perceived by those who inhabited it. This was a quite different exercise than the two Dutch visions of Asia that bear any comparison to Post and Eckhout. The first of these is that of a certain Hendrik van Schuylenburgh, who in the 1660s produced at least two large paintings of the Dutch factories at Hugli and Kasimbazar in Bengal that were intended to hang in the VOC’s offices in the Netherlands.⁶⁶ Schuylenburgh probably did not visit India, but it is clear from his paintings that he had seen Mughal miniatures from which he drew ethnographic details to surround his image of the Dutch factory with an exotic landscape replete with widow-burning, hook-swinging, and the like. The other case is that of Andries Beeckman from Zutphen, who is best known for his panoramic oil painting of Batavia viewed from the river in the 1650s, but who also produced an important album of ethnographic watercolor paintings centering on Southeast Asia, as well as some loose paintings of other parts of the world.⁶⁷

In this context, it is worth returning to a daring experiment carried out by Rembrandt’s younger contemporary, Willem Schellinks (ca. 1627–78), a rather enigmatic figure who has only recently begun to attract a good deal of attention. Besides being a painter and draftsman, Schellinks was also a somewhat indifferent poet and an inveterate traveler, although he does not seem ever to have left Europe. Like Beeckman, mentioned above, Schellinks was associated with the figure of Laurens van der Hem, an Amsterdam-based bourgeois, lawyer, and collector, who put together a massive *Atlas* of fifty volumes which included many drawings by these and other painters.⁶⁸ The son of a tailor from Maasbree, Schellinks belonged to an extensive family, and we know that at least one of his brothers, Laurens, was later employed as a surgeon and a draughtsman in Asia by the VOC and may even have left behind a diary of his voyages (which is, however, lost to us). But this was long after the period of Schellinks’s life with which we are concerned, which almost certainly preceded the extensive travels to England, Italy, and elsewhere that he undertook with his wealthy patron Jaques Thierry and his son in the years 1661 to 1665.⁶⁹ It is his English phase for which the artist is particularly known, for it eventually provided the context for his best-known set of paintings, a series of imagined depictions of the Battle of Chatham (on the Medway river) in Kent, where an English fleet was attacked, burned, and humiliated (with its flagship captured) by the Dutch under Admiral Michel de Ruyter in June 1667.

It would, however, seem that in the 1640s and 1650s, Schellinks circulated in the world of collectors and artists that included Rembrandt, and who had begun the process of acquiring Mughal paintings and drawings. This was a world that may have included Van der Hem, and which would later involve Nicolaas Witsen, also



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2
 Willem Schellinks, *Hawking Party*,
 no date. Oil on canvas. Private
 collection. After Sotheby's, London,
Old Master Paintings, December
 5, 2007 – photograph courtesy
 Sotheby's Picture Library, London

a great traveler who was to become the burgomaster of Amsterdam. In 1671, the French doctor and antiquarian Charles Patin visited Amsterdam and came into contact with this milieu, which possessed (as he stated) “divers Paintings that we know, and others which are unknown to us; as also Indian and Chinese Pieces of an inestimable value.” Patin noted that there were in particular “four Remarkable Repositories, in which are contain’d as many rarities as I ever saw elsewhere.” The first of these belonged to “M. de Witzen Recorder of the City” and Patin added somewhat sarcastically that “it seems as if his House were built less for an Habitation, than to delight the Eyes; nothing being to be found in any part of it but Magnificence and Symmetry; neither can it be distinguish’d whether the Repository serves as an Ornament to the House, or the House to the Repository.” Besides Witsen, Patin mentioned a certain M. Gril (who possessed a collection of medals), as well as the advocates Laurens van der Hem and Lucas Lucasz Occo as each having “their particular Museum,” filled with both ancient objects and “a Multitude of new Rarities.”⁷⁰

Obviously immersed in these “new Rarities,” Schellinks embarked on a series of ambitious oil paintings on Mughal themes, of which four have come down to us thus far. The first of these is known as the *Hawking Party* (Fig. 2).⁷¹ It shows Shah Jahan and his four sons—Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb, and Murad Bakhsh—on horseback, accompanied by servants and hunters. One of the servants is a young African boy. The four princes resemble each other strongly, with similar beards and noses, and the individual characteristics of their faces are less clearly brought out than those of their father who rides a white horse and prominently occupies the center of the scene. They are fundamentally distinguished by their costumes and their horses. One of the princes, possibly Dara, carries a hawk perched on his hand. To the left a landscape rolls out towards distant and dramatic moun-



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3
 Willem Schellinks, *A Turkish Sultan and His Court* (sic), no date. Oil on canvas. Private collection. After Sotheby's, London, *Old Master Paintings*, July 4, 1984, no. 365 – photograph courtesy Sotheby's Picture Library, London

tains, and in the middle ground, an elephant and a rhinoceros are seen fighting. To the right are two flowering trees, on one of which sits an exotic red long-tailed parakeet. All in all, the painting is an excellent example of a form of pseudo-realism, in which the five royal figures (and their entourage) have been placed in a landscape that the artist has almost entirely imagined and constructed through an accumulation of exotic but improbable details. The vegetation, with the exception of some distant palms, does not seem Indian; and the palms were hardly appropriate for an evocation of Hindustan. It may well have been that Schellinks had seen other Mughal hunting scenes, and adapted them; one such painting can be found today in the Millionenzimmer and can be said to bear a generic resemblance, in the central figure of Shah Jahan on horseback, his four sons accompanying him (one with a hawk perched on his hand), and a landscape that extends beyond.⁷² Unlike the white-bearded emperor accompanied by his adult sons in Schellinks's vision, this is a younger, black-bearded Shah Jahan, perhaps from the early 1630s, and the sons are beardless youths. But the other differences are more striking still: the landscape of the Mughal painting leads us eventually to the banks of a river with a boat half-way across, while tiny human and animal figures splash and run about on the other side. The vegetation is carefully rendered, hardly exotic. No strange birds can be seen, and though elephants and other domestic animals are depicted, oddly-paired animals do not fight to provide a bizarre backdrop. The Mughal painting also renders Shah Jahan with a proper royal halo or nimbus, which the realistic demands of Schellinks's painting obviously cannot accommodate.

This painting can be paired with a second, often mistitled *A Turkish Sultan and His Court* (Fig. 3).⁷³ Here, Shah Jahan sits on a low canopied platform, to the right of the painting, accompanied by one of his sons (perhaps Dara), and an elderly figure, similar to one of the Sufis in the Millionenzimmer painting copied by Rembrandt



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4
 Willem Schellinks, *Mughal Court Scene with Shahjahan and His Sons*, no date. Oil on canvas. Musée Guimet, Paris. Photograph by Thierry Ollivier, courtesy Musée Guimet

(see above). A squarish building, half-hidden by vegetation, lies in the background. The emperor, the same white-bearded figure of the other painting, is still portrayed in profile (as in conventional Mughal painting) and looks out to the space before him, which is occupied by a group of musicians and dancers. One of these is an excellently rendered female musician, seated and playing a stringed gourd instrument or *bīn*. However, Schellinks once more introduces a strongly exotic note in the form of the principal female dancer, who is portrayed wearing a diaphanous dress through which her body is visible. By this means, the painting draws at one and the same time on the genre of the courtly scene (where the emperor is presented with musicians, dancers, and the like), and the erotic or “harem” scene. Palm trees complete the impression of an exotic and tropical landscape. This is once again within the genre of a form of Dutch pseudo-naturalism, not unlike that practiced by Post and Eckhout, with an important exception: rather than being based on travel and observation, it derives from an earlier set of paintings or visual sources. Freed of the need to respond to an actual Indian experience, Schellinks can give rein to his imagination while playing with the elements provided to him by the received body of paintings he has inspected.

The two remaining paintings, however, diverge from those that have been discussed above, entirely abandoning the realistic or pseudo-naturalistic register in favour of something that is rather unprecedented. We may begin with the better-studied of the two, that in the Musée Guimet in Paris (Fig. 4). The painting shows a scene ostensibly from the court of Shah Jahan, but which is extremely complex in its compositional structure compared to the two paintings we have already discussed. The scene is painted, as it were, from an off-stage position. The artist’s eye



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Detail from Fig. 4, showing Dara on a composite elephant.

looks from behind at the emperor in part-profile.⁷⁴ Shah Jahan appears at the bottom right of the composition, arms akimbo and with his legs folded under him as he surveys the scene before him. And what a scene it is! From right to left, his sons parade in front of him, respectively on a camel, an elephant, a horse, and a palanquin carried by servants. It is likely that the princes are represented as follows: Aurangzeb (significantly carrying a bloodied dagger) on the camel, Dara on the elephant with a parasol (Fig. 5), Murad on the horse, and Shuja' on the palanquin (the last two are probable attributions).⁷⁵ As in the other paintings, the artist does not distinguish their physiognomies well enough for precise identification. A rich canopy hangs above the emperor, and courtiers peer out from semi-darkness behind the parade. The emperor is flanked to the right by a courtier in a striped costume with a fly-whisk, and to the left by his daughter (undoubtedly Jahanara rather than Roshanara), also in the same kneeling pose and delicately sniffing a flower. It is as if the emperor is located in a sunken pit, while the action takes place on a slightly raised stage. Other servants and lackeys (one of whom is again African) occupy this lower level, as do a variety of luxurious objects. Two important features set this painting apart from any attempts at naturalism or realism. First, the vehicles (the *vāhanas* if one will) of all the Mughal princes are really composite animals made up of women and a few musical instruments. Schellinks here has chosen to break completely with any attempt at realism and enter a step deeper into Mughal conventions by his use of these composite animals. A second feature is also



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Detail from Fig. 4, showing Akbar and Jahangir in apotheosis.

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Akbar and Jahangir in Apotheosis,
Mughal, 17th-century. Bodleian
Library, Oxford, Ms. Douce Or. a. 1,
fol. 19a. Photograph The Bodleian
Library, Oxford



7

curious. To the top left of the painting, within a cloud, is an imagined scene where the emperor's father and grandfather—Jahangir and Akbar—are found kneeling in conversational mode, presumably in the hereafter (Fig. 6). They oversee, but do not glance at, the parade of princes passing below them. This, as Robert Skelton was the first to point out, is a direct copy of an “apotheosis” scene featuring Akbar and Jahangir that Rembrandt too had copied, and of which a version can now be found in another collection (Fig. 7).⁷⁶

Faced with the extremely curious composition of this scene, entirely at odds with the received wisdom regarding the thrust of Dutch “realism” in the seventeenth century, art historians have attempted convoluted explanations. Whatever this is, it is certainly not easy to fit in to the supposed “art of describing.” In 1958, Jean de Loewenstein attempted to draw the painting back into the field of a form of realism using a singular device.⁷⁷ He proposed that Shah Jahan was in fact not at all directly concerned with the parade of his sons. Rather, he argued, it was necessary to divide the painting into two parts, the first realist and the second illusory. The realist part, he argued, was that at the lower level of the scene, where the emperor, his daughter, and their entourage are found. The second, illusory part involved both the parade of the sons and the two deceased emperors in apotheosis. To explain the passage from the one to the other, Loewenstein proposed that the “key to the enigma” could be found in the figure of a short man, holding a creature, a “black lamb” perhaps, in his arms, who appears in the center of the bottom section (Fig. 8). This man, a



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Detail from Fig. 4, showing the “magician” figure.

dwarf (*nain*) it was suggested, was nothing short of a court magician and hypnotist who had produced the illusion for Shah Jahan’s benefit. Loewenstein is assertive on the matter: “It is clear that Schellinks has us attending a séance of hypnotism in which the dwarf is the principal actor.” Shah Jahan is entirely in the hands of this magician and imagines everything that he sees, be it the parade of his sons, or his father and grandfather in the sky. The tarnish on Schellinks’s “realism” could thus be rubbed off; all that he had done was to show us the hypnotized emperor imagining something. There was moreover a sort of smokescreen that covered the whole scene, which was simply “the incense-smoke burnt by the magician’s assistants; as we know, incense plays a central role in the Orient in religious cults and in magic.”

This extremely ingenious explanation was obviously credible in its time. However, a major difficulty is posed by the existence of a second painting by Schellinks (in other words, the fourth in our series) which is to be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Fig. 9). Here Schellinks inverts the scene, somewhat as he was to do later with the Battle of Chatham series, where two of his paintings show the battle from above Sheerness while two others show it from the high ground to the north of Rochester Bridge. In this other painting, the foreground is occupied by the parade of the princes, with the two deceased emperors suspended above them in apotheosis; the emperor, his daughter and his companions (among whom the dwarf-magician is nowhere visible) are placed in the background while courtiers look on the scene from balconies above. Even more puzzling, the order of the princes and their vehicles remains the same: from right to left, Auranzgeb is on the camel, Dara on the elephant, Murad on the horse, and Shuja’ on the palanquin. It is as if the artist has taken the parade as the central and stable feature (save in details), reproduced the scene of the emperors in apotheosis, and then shifted the spectating eye from the foreground to the background. This allows us a presenta-



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 Willem Schellinks, *Shahjahan Watching a Parade of his Sons on Composite Animals*, no date. Oil on canvas. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photograph Victoria and Albert Museum, London

tion of the Mughal court proper, where Shah Jahan appears with not one but two daughters, as well as a mysterious scene above his head featuring an image of the sun behind a seated lion. Whatever this is, it is neither a scene of hypnotism nor even a scene requiring an immediate decoding in a neo-realist language. Since the parade we are witnessing in the second painting is not from the emperor's perspective, as it were, but from our own (though a set of fringed curtains at the edges of the canvas does make it evident that it is indeed theatre of some sort), we cannot easily fall back on such explanations. Rather, we are left to conclude that Schellinks here did indeed indulge in a level of play that was quite unusual. He had, so we may guess, been exposed to Mughal paintings of composite animals and was hence drawing on far more than the visual language provided to him by Giuseppe Arcimboldo.⁷⁸ Such paintings can in fact be found even in the *Laud Ragamala*, where we find a "man carried in a litter formed of women; he holds a wine cup."⁷⁹

We are hence obliged to speculate that Schellinks adopted two modes, neither of which can be compared with the strategies of Rembrandt. The first of these was to rework Mughal miniatures into the vocabulary of Dutch naturalism of the seventeenth century, producing two vigorous—but essentially bogus—neo-realist portraits, one with more erotic content than the other, but both deeply exoticist in their intent and execution. These paintings in fact prefigure paintings by British artists in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it is of some interest that they were executed by a painter who had not set foot in India but was essentially work-



10
Renold Elstrack, *Jahangir or "Padesha Shassalem"*, 1615. Engraving.
Photograph by the author

ing with the Mughal miniature paintings that were at his disposal in the 1640s and 1650s. This is effectively the content of the “hawking” and “harem” paintings. The two other paintings are far more imaginative and risky. Here, Schellinks deploys, as it were, what he could comprehend of the vocabulary of Mughal painters, creating composite animals, reproducing imaginary scenes of apotheosis, and accepting a set of compositional rules at some distance from his own. These are not paintings that can be understood as “allegorical” in any facile sense either, as interpreters have sometimes been tempted to do with puzzling Mughal paintings. Rather, they are extremely playful, too playful perhaps to have found real acceptance in the context of seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Schellinks himself, we know, turned in later years to painting naval battles and bucolic portraits of rural life in Italy.

Circulation and the Arts of the Book

There existed yet another route to visual communication and the European reception of Indian visual materials. It was provided by the printed book, which for its images also drew at times on forms of representation produced in India. The earliest example we can find of an Indian painting used as the basis of an engraving is probably Renold Elstrack’s *The true Pourtraicture of the Great and Most Potent Monarch, Padesha Shassalem, called the Great Mogoll of the Eastern India, King of forty[five] Kingdoms*, a print made for individual sale which depicts Jahangir from waist up in profile (Fig. 10). Other printed portraits of Jahangir appeared in subsequent decades, including one in Samuel Purchas’s version of an account by Edward Terry of the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, whom he had accompanied to India in the 1610s. This was a loose collective portrayal of three standing figures, respectively “Sultan Corooan” (Khurram), “his woman slave,” and on the right “Selim Shah the Great Mogull.” The Persian inscription taken (as Purchas states) and approximately copied “out of the Indian Copies made by the Mogols painter,” informs us that the original portrait “was painted by Manohar in the town of Mandu in 1026 Hijri [1616 CE] when I [Jahangir] was in my fiftieth year,” and corresponds to the time of Roe’s visit to the Mughal court. These images, like the standing figure of Jahangir that appears as the frontispiece of De Laet’s work on the Mughals (see above)—with his hand resting in a proprietorial gesture on the book’s title cartouche, and a seated lion in a small panel next to him—were part of an ongoing European interest not so much in ethnography as in physiognomy. It has been pointed out, for example, in relation to Venetian printed depictions of Ottoman subjects in the seventeenth century, that a vast number of these corresponded to the portraits of powerful political actors whose characters could be “read” from their portrayals.⁸⁰ To see the Mughal’s visage, even if only in profile, was somehow to know him and his intentions, and thus to gauge him as a political personality.

We shall return to this question of portraiture below. But we may also note that in the seventeenth century printed works with an ethnographic vision of India also began to appear, which attempted to reinforce or complement the printed word with the image. An excellent example of this can be found in the case of the French aristocrat, François le Gouz de la Boullaye (1623–68), who traveled very extensively in Europe and Asia in the middle decades of the seventeenth century, eventually publishing an account of his experiences in 1653 and then in a new edition in 1657.⁸¹ This account enjoyed quite considerable popularity for a brief time, until it was superseded on the one hand by Bernier's writings, and on the other hand by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's doubtful but lavishly illustrated travelogue. In its original version Bernier's text did not come with any visual counterpart. He had apparently made drawings of some of the Indian gods while visiting temples ("les figures de plusieurs de leurs dieux ou idoles"), but eventually desisted from using them on determining that better drawings had been made available in Europe by the Jesuit Heinrich Roth, who resided at the Mughal court and was a source for the celebrated work of Athanasius Kircher, *China Illustrata*.⁸² As for Tavernier, the many illustrations that one finds in his works do not seem to be based on any prior Indian representations, but were in all probability concocted by his engravers in conversation with the traveler himself.⁸³

The case of Boullaye proves more intriguing. Mitter has already remarked that some of the images in his work seemed to be "based on popular Indian religious paintings," though it had often been supposed that the traveler himself was something of an artist.⁸⁴ However, the recent re-examination of a manuscript of his work in the Fondo Corsini at the library of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome, advances our knowledge of the methods of illustration employed by Boullaye quite considerably.⁸⁵ It emerges that the manuscript contains forty-nine illustrations in comparison to only thirty-four in the printed text, and that the manuscript illustrations are characterized by different styles. Michele Bernardini, who has examined the text closely, concludes that the weakest manuscript illustrations are probably by Boullaye himself. There are also traces of the work of a second, more "professional" European hand, notably in drawings of Boullaye, such as one in which he is shown dedicating the work to Cardinal Capponi. Of greatest interest, however, is the clear evidence from the manuscript of work by one or more Indian artists. These include drawings of Krishna and the *gopīs* as well as other scenes from the life of Krishna, of various other Indian divinities such as Rama, Sita, Hanuman, Mahadeva, Parvati, and Ganesha, but also at least one drawing of a relatively minor figure, Shravana Kumar. Here, Boullaye remarks: "Seruan is honoured at Damaon [Daman] and the places around the said city that are in possession of the Portuguese, and he died in the kingdom of Guzerat. He is painted walking and carrying his father and his

mother who were very old, and he is the symbol of the honour and reverence that we owe to our parents. He is taken to be a great saint by the pagan idolaters around Damaon.” It is thus very likely that these drawings were made by artists in southern Gujarat (which Boullaye visited), who had been exposed both to the tradition of the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, and other Indian paintings of Vaishnava, Saiva, and Jain figures. What is worth noting, however, is the considerable impoverishment of the figures in their passage from the Indian artist or artists to the eventual engravings, where much of the subtlety and attention to detail in the costumes has been lost, and certain attributes have been mistakenly introduced.

Philip Angel, a figure who has already been mentioned above, provides another case of appropriation of images from western India that appeared in print, albeit through a more complex route. Angel, who in the 1640s and 1650s spent time in Batavia, Sri Lanka, India, and Iran, produced an interesting set of illustrations of the ten *avatāras* of Vishnu, which were eventually used to accompany a text on the same subject.⁸⁶ The authorship of the text, which exists in two copies, has been the subject of some controversy, and it has long been believed that Angel either translated it from an earlier Portuguese text originating in western India, or appropriated an existing translation in Dutch. As for the images, they once again present a puzzle. Those that appear with Angel’s text are in fact a hybrid, seemingly based on a set of Indian originals (possibly in the Mughal style or a western Indian one) but also exhibiting clear signs of adaptation to European narrative painting forms.⁸⁷ At the same time, they are not at all comparable, say, to Schellinks’s reinscription of Mughal materials within the conventions of seventeenth-century Dutch realism or pseudo-realism. What is of interest for us is that Angel’s paintings were later taken almost in their entirety and presented without attribution in a work on the beliefs and gods of the heathens of India by the Dutch minister Philippus Baldaeus that appeared to great public acclaim in 1672.⁸⁸ They thus became a part of the standard visual vocabulary for the presentation of the religious practices of India to a European audience, and would be used time and again by other printers, engravers, and intellectuals.⁸⁹

By the closing years of the seventeenth century, then, a close relationship and even complicity existed in Europe between collectors, painters, and engravers in the presentation of the visual image of India. It was in the context of this complicity that much of the reception of Indian (and especially Mughal) art came to be determined. Collectors like Nicolaas Witsen would eventually be able to recover Indian and Persian materials from their traveling agents, some of whom were painters themselves, or from other personnel of the VOC.⁹⁰ A good deal of this material remained in Amsterdam, but some of it also made its way elsewhere in Europe.⁹¹ One of the most remarkable European collections of Mughal painting at the close

of the seventeenth century was thus constituted in Italy, by an aristocrat who had connections with Witsen and others in the Netherlands. This was the Conte Abate Giovanni Antonio Baldini (1654–1725), who came to create a large collection of oriental objects and paintings at his residence in Piacenza. Baldini had never traveled to India, but had visited England, the Netherlands, France, and Austria, and also been the Duke of Parma's envoy to Madrid. A diplomat and connoisseur with powerful friends in the Church, Baldini was equally able to deal with James II (in his French exile) and Isaac Newton. Though his collection was dispersed at Baldini's death, it was fortunately commented on by a number of his contemporaries, one of whom—the celebrated naturalist Antonio Vallisnieri—produced a quite detailed description of its contents.⁹² A clear sense may thus be gained of some of the principal items in the collection having to do with Mughal India. It is clear that the bulk of these are in fact groupings of individual portraits, often of the Mughal rulers, in a standard series running from Timur to Aurangzeb. In one case, the list extends as far as the emperor Farrukhsiyar in the mid-1710s. Related to these, but far more ambitious in its extent, was a series of 178 full-length figures, “tall, dressed in the oriental fashion, and representing the kings and queens of twenty-two families that are said to have ruled in the Indies for the space of 4,753 years, from Judister [Yudhishtira] the first King, until 1702, the year in which the book was painted.” Of a more ethnographic nature were eighteen paintings, described as “representing various Fakirs, or penitent idolaters, who live continually in solitude and nakedness among the woods.” Another lot of over a hundred miniatures contained many individual portraits of royalty, officials, and ministers, but also “public festivals, ceremonies, arms and customs of those peoples, with notes in explanation on the back, written by those who brought them to Europe.”

Of all these albums, only one can currently be traced. This is the twenty-fourth item on Vallisnieri's list, described by him as “Kings of Mogol and other Indian princes ... represented on parchment” and is today in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (Fig. 11, Fig. 12).⁹³ The manuscript carries some initial comments in Italian, apparently in the hand of Baldini, stating that “it contains forty-seven portraits in miniature [*ritratti in miniatura*] of the Princes of Mogol, which were collected on the voyage that was carried out in 1690 in Persia and India by Mr Claudio Le Brun, a Dutch painter. Vitzen [Witsen], the burgomaster of Amsterdam, had all the said portraits copied, and I saw the copies in his house in the year 1714.” The reference here is to Cornelis de Bruyn (ca. 1652–1727), a Dutch artist and traveler, and author of a travel account.⁹⁴ Baldini in his notes insists, as does Vallisnieri elsewhere, on the physiognomic significance of these portraits. For Vallisnieri, commenting on three series of portraits of the Mughals, “the faces of the portraits ... resemble each other so closely that it is quite evident they are not imaginary, but taken after the



11

11

Portrait of Mulla Tayfur, Golconda, late 17th century. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Ms. Smith-Lesouëf 233, fol. 16. Photograph BnF

originals.” To Baldini, the evaluation of another contemporary artist was equally precious: “Signore Carlo Cignani, having attentively considered the portraits of this book in the month of November 1716 said that almost all the heads could have been done by Titian or Tintoretto.”⁹⁵

During Baldini’s lifetime, these works did not remain confined to his private museum but came to be more widely divulged. This was the result of Baldini’s relationship to an important figure from the world of print, namely the engraver Bernard Picart.⁹⁶ Picart was able to draw on Baldini’s miniatures and his expertise in relation to his work on Henri Châtelain’s *Atlas Historique*: in his introductory notes, he acknowledged his debt “to Mr le Comte Jean Anthoine Baldini, no less to be recommended for his excellent knowledge than for the particular care he has taken to collect such diverse, rare and curious pieces, the worthy fruits of his voyages.”⁹⁷ These engravings are quite diverse. They include at least four based on *rāgamāla* paintings, and several others of *faqīrs* and penitents, often grossly misidentified by



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Portrait of the Emperor Akbar,
Golconda, late 17th century.
Bibliothèque nationale de France,
Paris, Ms. Smith-Lesouéf 233, fol. 25.
Photograph BnF

Baldini. Further, Picart also drew upon Baldini for a series of portraits of Mughal emperors, including Aurangzeb. Picart also surprisingly included two spectacular and elaborate paintings, one of which depicts the fort in Agra at the time of the emperor Jahangir, and the other the Battle of Samugarh in May 1658.⁹⁸ Here is how Vallisnieri describes these paintings:

“A coloured drawing, folio size, of parchment, about two palms [44.5 cm] high, in which is represented the palace of Agra, where the Kings of Mogol reside, showing its plan, elevation and prospect, with more than a hundred persons standing inside and outside that regal structure, which consists of many courtyards. In the largest courtyard the King is shown, seated on his throne, with his wives also seated in front of him. This courtyard is dominated by the King’s apartment, which is divided into three floors, one above the other; on the lowest floor are the rooms of the four principal Queens. In the courtyard before the palace the King is portrayed again on a high wooden platform watching a combat of two elephants. The custody

of the interior of the palace is entrusted to Tartar women, armed with bows and arrows. By the principal gateway, which is opened only for the king, two of these women are shown standing and looking at each other, and two others stand in the same posture guarding a secret door. A eunuch stands there as a sentinel keeping an eye, through a little opening in the wall, on the room in which the royal treasure is kept.”

Picart adds for his part that this painting was “drawn exactly on the spot by a man of distinction [*un Homme de distinction*], who had done particular research on all sorts of remarkable singularities”:

“An Indian miniature, in which is represented the battle which Aurengzebe and Murad, sons of the King Shah Jehan, fought against their father in 1656 [*sic*]. The royal personages are seated on gilded thrones placed on the backs of elephants. In addition to the infantry and cavalry, several squadrons of soldiers who fight standing on elephants are seen in action; others stand on camels and carry swivel guns. Some of the above-mentioned soldiers bind the reins of their horses across their bodies in order to manage their swords more freely with their right hands, and their shields with their left.”⁹⁹

In order to transform these paintings into engravings, so Vallisnieri tells us, Picart first made pen drawings from the Mughal originals, and only then engraved them on copper. Paradoxically, from what one can see, these paintings, though spectacular, were not of the highest quality, a feature that also characterizes the surviving album collected by Cornelis de Bruyn.¹⁰⁰ De Bruyn, for his part, had a somewhat mediocre opinion of artistic talent in eastern lands, as we see from the following passage in his travel account:

“The greatest part of the Persians have pictures in their houses, and especially representations of horses, hunting-marches, and of all sorts of animals, birds and flowers, wherewith their walls are also filled, as hath already been said. They also have professed painters among them, the two best of which, in my time, were in the service of the King. I had the curiosity to pay a visit to one of them, and I found his works far above the idea I had conceived of the matter; they consisted only of birds in distemper, but extremely neat. Indeed I cannot say he knew any thing of lights and shades, and in this all the country are ignorant, whence it is that their paintings are very imperfect.”¹⁰¹

This leads us to consider a final example, in itself a somewhat celebrated one. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Venetian adventurer Nicolò Manuzzi (or Manucci), who had lived continuously in India since the 1650s, prepared an elaborate text on Mughal India, using his own resources, a mixture of odd erudition and imagination, spiced with a dash of plagiarism. To further valorize this text, he had two sets of illustrations prepared, the first of which he claimed were

made while he was in the service of the prince Shah 'Alam in the Deccan, through a friend called Mir Muhammad, also in that prince's service. These were royal portraits, roughly in the style of those possessed by Baldini, Witsen, and others, and of these Manuzzi had the following to say:

"Before leaving the kingdom of the Mogol, I had ... all these portraits of kings and princes, from Tamerlane to Aurangzeb, and of the sons and nephews of the last No one, so far as I know, has presented these portraits to the [European] public, or if someone has done so, they bear no relation to mine, which are authentic, while the others can only be false. In fact, to have them I spared no expense and I had to give great gifts, and all that with a thousand difficulties and subterfuges, with the promise that I would never reveal that I possessed them."¹⁰²

A second set of ethnographic depictions of scenes from daily life (not in the Mughal idiom) were sent by him to Europe in 1705, where they were delivered with other papers to Lorenzo Tiepolo, Venetian ambassador in Paris. Tiepolo then wrote to the Venetian Senate in February 1706, describing the whole affair.¹⁰³ He even managed to persuade the Jesuits in Paris, who were at that time in possession of the first volume with copied Mughal paintings, to give them to him and eventually announced to the Senate that he was sending them "all the papers of Manucci given to me by the said Capuchin—that is those of the History, the two books of drawings, and fourteen pieces of bezoar stones"; the package arrived in Venice two weeks later.

Partly on account of the attractive character of the illustrations, there seems to have been little doubt in Venice about the importance of the text and the need to have it published, but it was nevertheless deemed necessary to have the whole work examined by a competent authority. It was thus handed over to the university council, the *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, in late July, and in late March 1707 a report was presented to the Senate confirming the great significance of the work. Since the text was in a mixture of languages, a full translation into Italian was begun in 1708, and completed in 1712. But it eventually proved impossible to find a publisher for the whole. From 1706, the *Riformatori* had charged itself with this task, but was unable to come to a satisfactory conclusion with the Printer's Guild (*Stampatori*) in Venice, especially in view of the costs involved in producing some 130 high-quality engravings. What is of interest, however, is that no one called the quality of the images themselves into question. For Manuzzi's versions of the portraits of the Mughals are quaint but really rather mediocre, the slapdash versions of a painter from the bazaar rather than someone who had been trained in the Mughal atelier. Like Witsen's collection from the Deccan or Baldini's album of Safavid, Decani, and Mughal portraits, they did not meet the standards of the elite Mughal artist but were in fact a sort of ersatz Mughal painting. Ironically, from this point of

view, Manuzzi's second album—of ethnographic depictions of scenes of daily life, rites of passage and the like, probably produced by textile painters in the region of Madras—is the more interesting of the two collections of visual representations of India he had produced.

Concluding Remarks

To conclude, the history that we have surveyed can be comprehended using at least two distinct frameworks. The first of these is a model of unequal or at least asymmetric exchange. In this version, over the course of a century and a half, Europeans largely exported to Mughal India not original works of art but engravings and mass-produced images using the powerful technology of print. They provoked a substantial reaction among Mughal artists who deployed these materials creatively in a variety of ways, and thus wound up substantially reworking the canon of Mughal painting in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is not to imply that European influences were all that counted in the dynamic of Mughal art, merely that they did count for something substantial. In contrast, Mughal and related art when it arrived in Europe was usually in the form of the paintings themselves, in other words in its original (rather than any reproduced) form. To be sure, the flow was at first limited, but it seems to have increased considerably from the mid-seventeenth century onward. Still, it affected only a handful of artists, even if some of these were undoubtedly men of power and prestige. To the extent that Mughal art counted, it was eventually in terms either of its ethnographic impact (say, on the portrayal of the religious life of India), or in terms of political interest in physiognomy. Typifying this model of asymmetric exchange is the fine analysis by Ebba Koch, which notes on the one hand that “the art of the democratic and bourgeois milieu of the Low Countries evoked a congenial response in an entirely different cultural and social context, at a court in Mughal India which was famed for its oriental absolutism and exotic splendour,” but also remarks on the other hand that “Rembrandt and Schellincks's interest in Mughal miniatures seems to have been an isolated phenomenon.”¹⁰⁴ If this is indeed our model, we might well deploy it, ironically enough, to contrast the Mughal artist's openness and creativity to the hidebound character of his European counterpart, even when—like Cornelis de Bruyn—the latter had traveled far and wide.

A second framework, which I must confess to finding rather more sympathetic, would move away from a model based primarily on concepts such as “influence” and “response” (however indispensable these may eventually turn out to be), to ideas of “connected histories” based in turn on the idea that the relations between cultures must be mediated, and that this mediation involves among other things the production (rather than the mere fact) of commensurability.¹⁰⁵ Rather than posit

that visual cultures were either commensurable or incommensurable, we need to focus on the acts that produced commensurability. This in turn requires us to focus on the peculiar contexts of the actors, as well as the concrete objects that were produced. Since the contexts were usually inter-imperial ones, the processes to which we refer were not at all innocent, but deeply political in their nature. Herein lies the rub, and a suggestion as to why the repeated encounters between the visual representations produced in Western Europe and those produced in Mughal India produced such a spectrum of outcomes over space and time. It may also help us to understand why things changed after 1760, when the British gained power over the revenues and the material objects of the sub-continent. For in the loot that was taken after the Battle of Plassey (in 1757) were many splendid collections of Mughal paintings, as well as illustrated manuscripts, which came to grace the auction houses of London and eventually form the bases of most of the great collections of Mughal paintings that we find today in Europe and beyond.¹⁰⁶ But these objects collected by Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, Richard Johnson, and so many others entered a different market from that in which Baldini and Witsen had operated not long before. These post-1760 paintings were for the most part no longer needed as witnesses to a current Indian reality; for that purpose, one had British and other European academic painters and engravers who embarked on ships to produce the authoritative vision of the East India Company's new domains.¹⁰⁷ Rather, they were the nostalgic witnesses to a past, archaic objects that could be cherished as such. With the help of a political revolution or two, one could indeed now "turn the Perspective / And farther off the lessen'd Object drive."

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NOTES

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- 1 For a discussion of this play, see Michael W. Alssid, "The Design of Dryden's Aureng-Zebe," *Journal of English and German Philology* 64, no. 3 (1965): 452–69.
- 2 For the implications of this, see for example, Timon Screech, *The Shogun's Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States, 1760–1829* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).
- 3 See Howard Sankey, "Kuhn's Changing Concept of Incommensurability," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 44, no. 4 (1993): 759–74.
- 4 Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 180.
- 5 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art: The Mughals, the Jesuits, and Imperial Mural Painting," *The Art Journal* 57, no. 1 (1998): 25.
- 6 S. N. Banerjee and John S. Hoyland, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate* (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1922), 37.
- 7 Charles R. Boxer, "A Tentative Check-List of Indo-Portuguese Imprints," *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Português* [Paris] 9 (1975): 567–99, which supersedes the earlier discussion by the same author in the *Boletim do Instituto Vasco da Gama*, no. 73 (1956): 1–23.
- 8 See Henrique Henriques (Antirikku Atikalar), *Flos Sanctorum enra atiyār varalāru*, ed. Ca. Iracamanikkam (Tutukkudi: Tamil Ilakkiyak Kalakam, 1967); Ines G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontier in India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 253–7.
- 9 João de Barros, *Da Ásia, Década Segunda* (Lisbon: Livraria Sam Carlos, 1973), Book 3, Chapter 6, 309. All translations that follow are mine, unless stated otherwise.
- 10 Albuquerque to the King, Cochin, 1 April 1512, in R. A. de Bulhão Pato, ed., *Cartas de Afonso de Albuquerque seguidas de documentos que as elucidam*, vol. 1 (Lisbon, 1884), 44–5.
- 11 Also see, in this context, Clare L. Costley, "David, Bathsheba, and the Penitential Psalms," *Renaissance Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2004): 1235–77.
- 12 Diogo do Couto, *Década Quinta da Ásia*, ed. Marcus de Jong (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1937), Livro 8, Capítulo 8, 525–33, citation on 532–3.
- 13 Correia's signature appears on letters from the City of Chaul to Dom João de Castro, dated 22 May 1546, 3 April 1547, and 25 Nov. 1547, in Elaine Sanceau et al., *Colecção de São Lourenço*, vol. 3 (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1983), 205, 270, 295.
- 14 Chahryar Adle, "New Data on the Dawn of Mughal Painting and Calligraphy," in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, ed. Muzaffar Alam, Françoise N. Delvoye, and Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), especially 192–216.
- 15 Paul Lacombe, *Livres d'heures imprimés au XVe et au XVIe siècle, conservés dans les bibliothèques publiques de Paris* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1907). Cf. Artur Anselmo, *Les origines de l'imprimerie au Portugal* (Paris: Jean Touzot, 1983).

- 16 Ângela Barreto Xavier, *A invenção de Goa: Poder imperial e conversões culturais nos séculos XVI e XVII* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2008).
- 17 Rafael Moreira and Alexandra Curvelo, "A circulação das formas: Artes portáteis, arquitetura e urbanismo," in *História da Expansão Portuguesa*. Vol. 2, *Do Índico ao Atlântico (1570–1697)*, ed. Francisco Bethencourt and Kirti Chaudhuri (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1998), 538–40.
- 18 Bailey, "The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art," 28–9. See also Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 37–8.
- 19 "Quand je leur disais sur cela que dans les pays froids il serait impossible d'observer leur loi pendant l'hiver, ce qui était un signe qu'elle n'était qu'une pure invention des hommes, ils me donnaient cette réponse assez plaisante: qu'ils ne prétendaient pas que leur loi fût universelle; que Dieu ne l'avait faite que pour eux et que c'était pour cela qu'ils ne pouvaient pas recevoir un étranger dans leur religion; qu'au reste ils ne prétendaient point que la nôtre fût fausse; qu'ils se pouvait faire qu'elle fût bonne pour nous et que Dieu pouvait avoir fait plusieurs chemins différents pour aller au ciel, mais ils ne veulent pas entendre que la nôtre, étant générale pour toute la terre, la leur ne peut être que fable et que pure invention"; see Frédéric Tinguely, ed., *Un libertin dans l'Inde moghole: Les voyages de François Bernier (1656–1669)* (Paris: Editions Chandeigne, 2008), 327.
- 20 See Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 204, 210, 217.
- 21 Also see the letter from Jerónimo Xavier at Agra to the Provincial of the Company in India, Agra, 24 Sept. 1608, British Library, Additional 9854, fols. 64r–76v, in *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa*, ed. António da Silva Rego, vol. 3 (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1963), 111–33.
- 22 Muhammad 'Abdullah Chaghatai, "Mirat ul-Quds: An Illustrated Manuscript of Akbar's Period about Christ's Life," in *Lahore Museum Heritage*, ed. Anjum Rehmani (Lahore: Lahore Museum, 1994), 179–88.
- 23 'Abd al-Sattar ibn Qasim Lahauri, *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī: Majlis-hā-yi shabāna-i darbār-i Nūr al-Dīn Jahāngīr az 24 Rajab 1017 tā 19 Ramazan 1020*, ed. 'Arif Naushahi and Mu'in Nizami (Tehran: Mīras-i Maktub, 2006), Majlis 29, Rabi II, AH 1019, pp. 70–75. For an extensive analysis of this text and its implications, see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Frank Disputations: Catholics and Muslims in the Court of Jahangir (1608–11)," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46, no. 4 (2009): 457–511.
- 24 Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, 35. Bailey's claims that the Mughals identified the Virgin directly with their mythical female ancestor Alanqoa, and that Akbar and Jahangir strongly identified themselves with Jesus, have rightly met with a lukewarm reception in Mughal historiography.
- 25 *The Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 126.
- 26 See Gregory Minissale, "The Synthesis of European and Mughal Art in the Emperor Akbar's *Khamṣa* of Nizāmī," *asianart.com*, 2000, <http://www.asianart.com/articles/minissale>.
- 27 Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 4 (2007): 751–82, quotation on 778.
- 28 Pierre du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, trans. C. H. Payne (London: Harper & Brothers, 1926), 160–69; Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação anual das coisas que fizeram os padres da Companhia de Jesus nas suas missões (...) tirada das cartas que os missionários de lá escreveram*, vol. 1, ed. Artur Viegas (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1930), 299–302.
- 29 On Heda, see A. van der Willigen, *Les artistes de Harlem: Notices historiques avec un Précis sur la Gilde de St. Luc* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1970), 152–6, 367–71. Considerably more material on Heda can be found (accompanied, however, by an incomprehensible commentary) in Gijs Kruijtzter, *Xenophobia in Seventeenth-Century India* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009), 19–33.
- 30 Gita Dharampal, "Heinrich von Poser's Travelogue to the Deccan," *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* 73, nos. 3–4 (1981): 108.
- 31 Ebba Koch, "Netherlandish Naturalism in Imperial Mughal Painting," *Apollo* 152 (Nov. 2000): 29–37.
- 32 P. A. Leupe, "Nederlandsche schilders in Persië en Hindostan in de eerste helft der 17e eeuw," *De nederlandse spectator*, no. 33 (Aug. 16, 1873): 260–63, and no. 34 (Aug. 23, 1873): 165–6.
- 33 Leonard J. Slatkes, *Rembrandt and Persia* (New York: Abaris Books, 1983), 40–41.
- 34 On Vapoer, or Vapour, see the numerous references in *The Dutch Factories in India*. Vol. 2, [1624–1627], ed. Om Prakash and V. B. Gupta (New Delhi: Manohar, 2007), 107–8, 260–61, 342–3, passim. Governor-General Carpentier's letter to Pieter van den Broecke of 9 August 1624 notes his talent as a painter (107).
- 35 Letter from Van den Broecke at Surat to Batavia, April 6, 1626, in Prakash and Gupta, *The Dutch Factories in India*, 264.
- 36 Slatkes, *Rembrandt and Persia*, 127–8; Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, "Isaac Koedijck," in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1927), 181–90.

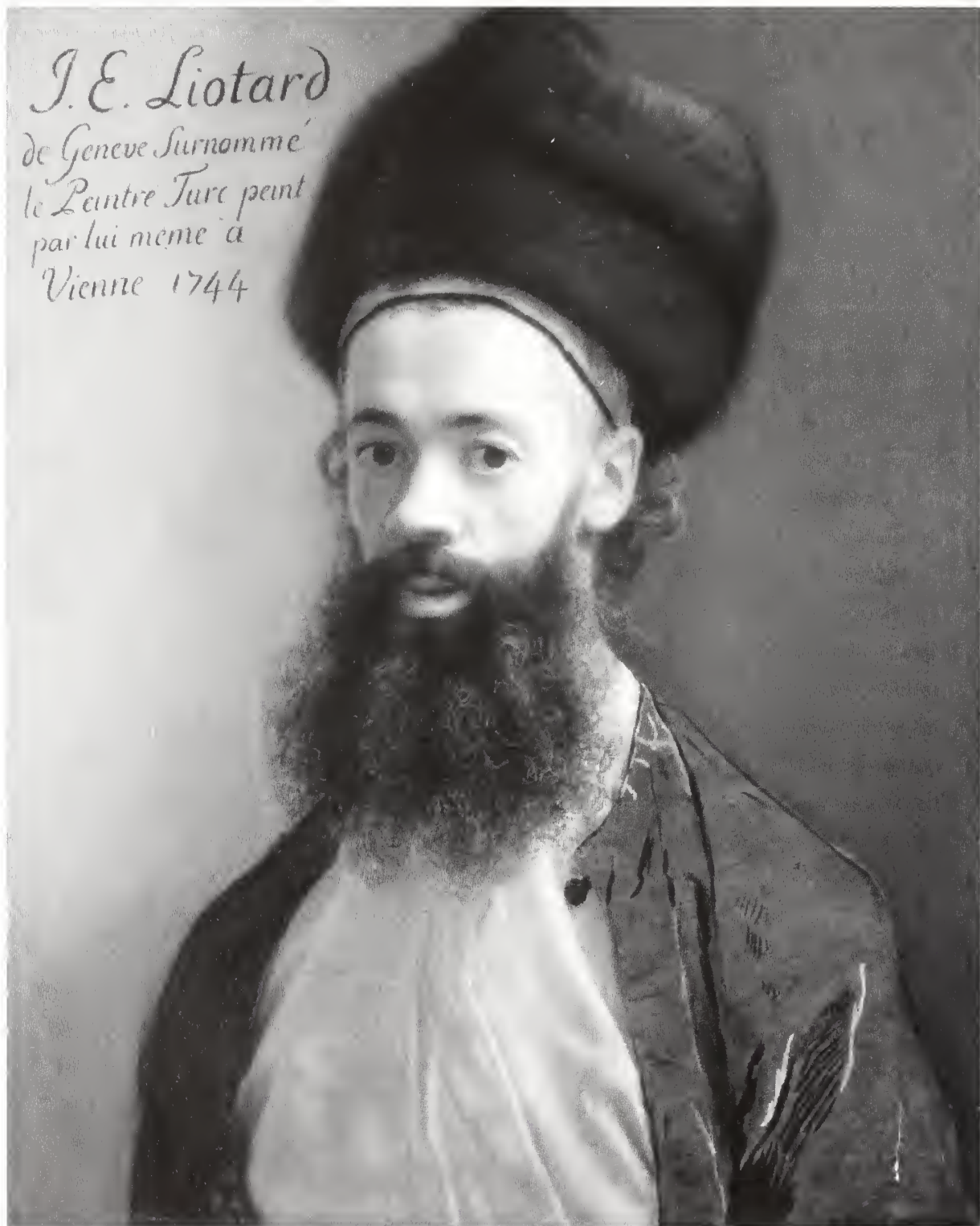
- 37 However, he is not mentioned in the context of the Dutch embassy of Van Adrichem to the Mughal court in 1662, for which see A. J. Bernet Kempers, ed., *Journal van Dircq van Adrichem's Hofreis naar den Groot-Mogol Aurangzeb* (1662) (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1941).
- 38 Pascal Pia, ed., *Voyage en Perse et Description de ce Royaume par Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, marchand français* (Paris: Editions du Carrefour, 1930), 135.
- 39 On this embassy, see the account by Cornelis Speelman, *Journal der reis van den gezant der O. I. Compagnie Joan Cunaeus naar Perzië in 1651–1652*, ed. A. Hotz (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1908).
- 40 Milo Cleveland Beach, Ebba Koch, and Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama, an Imperial Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1997), ill. 20, pp. 58–9, 180.
- 41 Koch, "Netherlandish Naturalism in Imperial Mughal Painting," 36.
- 42 Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 321–5. Also see the valuable survey by Francis Richard, "Les manuscrits persans d'origine indienne à la Bibliothèque nationale," *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale*, no. 19 (1986): 30–46.
- 43 Robert Skelton, "Indian Art and Artefacts in Early European Collecting," in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur Macgregor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 274–80.
- 44 See the interesting account by Rui Manuel Loureiro, *A Biblioteca de Diogo do Couto* (Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1998).
- 45 Luís de Matos, ed., *Imagens do Oriente no século XVI: Reprodução do Códice Português da Biblioteca Casanatense* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1985); and the discussion in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "O gentio indiano visto pelos Portugueses no século XVI," *Oceanos*, nos. 19/20 (1994): 190–96.
- 46 Jerónimo Corte-Real, *Sucesso do segundo cerco de Diu: Códice Cadaval 31 – ANTT*, ed. Martim de Albuquerque (Lisbon: Edições Inapa, 1991), reproduced with paintings by the author Corte-Real; also Francisco Faria Paulino, ed., *Tapeçarias de D. João de Castro* (Lisbon: Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, 1995).
- 47 See P. M. Holt, "The Study of Arabic Historians in Seventeenth Century England: The Background and the Work of Edward Pococke," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19, no. 3 (1957): 444–55; and more recently, G. J. Toomer, *Eastern wisdom and learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- 48 *Relaciones de Pedro Teixeira del origen, descendencia, y sucession de los reyes de Persia, y de Harmuz, y de un viage hecho por el mismo autor desde la India oriental hasta Italia por tierra* (Antwerp: H. Verdussen, 1610).
- 49 On this Jesuit scholar, see the charming account in Giorgio Levi Della Vida, *George Strachan: Memorials of a Wandering Scottish Scholar of the Seventeenth Century* (Aberdeen: Third Spalding Club, 1956).
- 50 Francis Richard, "Les manuscrits persans rapports par les frères Vecchietti et conservés aujourd'hui à la Bibliothèque Nationale," *Studia Iranica* 9, Part 2 (1980): 291–300.
- 51 See John D. Gurney, "Pietro della Valle: The Limits of Perception," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (1986): 103–16.
- 52 Otto Kurz, "A Volume of Indian Miniatures and Drawings," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (1967): 251–71.
- 53 Gurney, "Pietro della Valle," 109.
- 54 It is possible that this was in fact the Jesuit Francesco Corsi, mentioned above, himself a Florentine like Barberini.
- 55 This part of the question is left somewhat ambiguous in the important essay by John Seyller, "The Inspection and Valuation of Manuscripts in the Imperial Mughal Library," *Artibus Asiae* 57, nos. 3–4 (1997): 243–349.
- 56 Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 21–2; also, more recently, Ernst van den Boogaart, *Civil and Corrupt Asia: Image and Text in the 'Itinerario' and the 'Icones' of Jan Huygen van Linschoten* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- 57 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Laud Or. 149; also see the discussion in Herbert J. Stooke and Karl Khandalavala, *The Laud Ragamala Miniatures: A Study in Indian Painting and Music* (Oxford: B. Cassirer, 1953); and more recently in John Seyller, *Workshop and Patron in Mughal India: The Freer Rāmāyana and Other Illustrated Manuscripts of 'Abd al-Rahīm* (Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1999), 257–63. On Laud and his relations to Charles I, see L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- 58 On this manuscript, see J. V. S. Wilkinson, "An Indian Manuscript of the *Golestān* of the Shāh Jahān Period," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 423–5; and Elaine Wright et al., *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin* (Alexandria, Va.: Art Services International, 2008), 246–8. However, there is no trace of the transaction in William Foster, ed., *The English Factories in India, 1637–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912).
- 59 Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Mogol-miniaturen door Rembrandt nagetekend,"

- De kroniek van het Rembrandthuis*, no. 1 (1980): 10–40. Also see the pioneering essay by Friedrich Sarre, “Rembrandt Zeichnungen nach indisch-islamisch Miniaturen,” *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 25 (1904): 143–56. For extensive reproductions, see Otto Benesch, *The Drawings of Rembrandt*, ed. Eva Benesch, vol. 5 (London: Phaidon Press, 1973), 318–25, figs. 1486–1506.
- 60 Ebba Koch, “The ‘Moghuleries’ of the Mil-lionenzimmer, Schönbrunn Palace, Vienna,” in *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, ed. Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge, and Andrew Topsfield (London: Victoria & Albert Museum; Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2004), 152–67.
- 61 Nicola Courtright, “Origins and Meanings of Rembrandt’s Late Drawing Style,” *Art Bulletin* 78, no. 3 (1996): 485–510, quotation on 502.
- 62 Marijn Schapellhouman, *Rembrandt and the Art of Drawing* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2006), 17–19.
- 63 Slatkes, *Rembrandt and Persia*, 13–17.
- 64 Courtright, “Origins and Meanings,” 503–4, drawing extensively on Slatkes’s earlier discussion. Also see similar arguments on the use of Arabic script in paintings from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Rosamund E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- 65 Rebecca Parker Brien, “Albert Eckhout and Frans Post: Two Dutch Artists in Colonial Brazil,” in *Brazil: Body and Soul*, ed. Edward J. Sullivan (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2001), 92–111; and more recently Brien, *Visions of Savage Paradise: Albert Eckhout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), as also the highly skeptical view of Eckhout and Post in Peter Mason, *Infelicities: Representations of the Exotic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). There is obviously a tension between these Dutch “colonial” paintings and the broad interpretation provided in Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). On these issues, also see Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570–1670* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- 66 See Martine Gosselink, “Schilderijen van Bengaalse VOC-loges door Hendrik van Schuylenburgh,” *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 46 (1998): 390–409.
- 67 Marie-Odile Scalliet, “Une curiosité oubliée: le ‘Livre de dessins faits dans un voyage aux Indes par un voyageur hollandais’ du marquis de Paulmy,” *Archipel*, no. 54 (Paris, 1997), 35–62; for more on this traveler, see Erlend de Groot, “The Earliest Eyewitness Depictions of Khoikhoi: Andries Beeckman in Africa,” *Itinerario* 29, no. 1 (2005): 17–50.
- 68 Peter van der Krogt and Erlend de Groot, *The Atlas Blaeu-van der Hem of the Austrian National Library*, 7 vols. (‘t Goy-Houten: HES Publishers, 1996–2008).
- 69 Maurits Exwood and H. L. Lehmann, ed. and trans., *The Journal of William Schellinks’ Travels in England, 1661–1663* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1993); also Willem Schellinkx, *Viaggio al Sud, 1664–1665*, ed. Bernard Aikema, Hans Brand, Fransje Kuyvenhoven, Dulcia Meijers, and Pierre Mens (Rome: Edizioni dell’Elefante, 1983).
- 70 Charles Patin, *Travels thro’ Germany, Switzerland, Bohemia, Holland; and other Parts of Europe describing the most considerable Citys and the palaces of Princes: Together with Historical Relations, and Critical Observations upon Ancient Medals and Inscriptions* (London: A. Swall and T. Child, 1696), 204–5. For the context of these and other collections, also see Ellinoor Bergvelt and Renée Kistemaker, eds., *De Wereld binnen handbereik: Nederlandse kunst- en rareitenverzamelingen, 1585–1735* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1992); and Joy Kenseth, ed., *The Age of the Marvelous* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
- 71 This painting, like the following one, is in a private collection following a sale at Sotheby’s, London, December 5, 2007.
- 72 See Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, “De Moghul-miniaturen van Rembrandt,” in *Waarom Sanskrit? Honderdvijfentwintig jaar Sanskrit in Nederland*, ed. Hanneke van den Muyzenberg and Thomas de Bruijn (Leiden: Kern Institute, 1991), 95–115, especially 110 and plate 10; also Josef Strzygowski and Heinrich Glück, *Die indischen Miniaturen im Schlosse Schönbrunn* (Vienna: Wiener Drucke, 1923).
- 73 This painting has been in a private collection since 1984, after a sale at Sotheby’s, London, July 4, 1984, lot 365. I was initially able to consult it in a reproduction at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Photo Study Collection, Renaissance to Modern, ND 644, and subsequently through an image kindly sent to me by Sotheby’s Picture Library, London. Both images were in black and white.
- 74 The first extensive discussion of this painting is in J. Auboyer, “Un maître hollandais du XVII^e siècle s’inspirant des miniatures mogholes,” *Arts Asiatiques* 2 (1955): 251–73.
- 75 There is an octagonal descriptive cartouche to the bottom left of the painting that states from top to bottom

- "Achber / Janguer / Shajan / Shabegum / Darasheko / Soltansouja / Aurunzeve / Moratbex."
- 76 Skelton, "Indian Art and Artefacts in Early European Collecting," 279.
- 77 Jean de Lœwenstein, "A propos d'un tableau de W. Schellinks s'inspirant des miniatures mogholes," *Arts Asiatiques* 5, no. 4 (1958): 293–8.
- 78 The Milanese painter Arcimboldo (1527–93) is of course celebrated for his "composite" paintings that use fruits, vegetables, and other elements to make up what are often satirical human portraits. For some intriguing remarks on the parallels with other forms of Mughal art, see Wolfgang Born, "Ivory Powder Flasks from the Mughal Period," *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942): 93–111.
- 79 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Laud Or. 149, fol. 13b.
- 80 Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, & Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 248–55.
- 81 *Les Voyages et Observations du Sieur de la Boullaye-le-Gouz, gentil-homme angevin* (Paris: François Clousier, 1657).
- 82 On Kircher and Roth, see Arnulf Camps and Jean-Claude Muller, ed., *The Sanskrit Grammar and Manuscripts of Father Heinrich Roth, S.J. (1620–1668): Facsimile edition of Biblioteca Nazionale, Rome, Mss. Or. 171 and 172* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 5–9; Gita Dharampal-Frick, *Indien im Spiegel deutscher Quellen der Frühen Neuzeit (1500–1750): Studien zu einer interkulturellen Konstellation* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994), 88–92; and Paula Findlen, ed., *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
- 83 The lack of a manuscript corpus for Tavernier's work is troubling, as is his enormous dependence on ghost-writers such as Samuel Chappuzeau. However, a full modern treatment of his text is still awaited.
- 84 Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 55.
- 85 Michele Bernardini, "The Illustrations of a Manuscript of the Travel Account of François de la Boullaye le Gouz in the Library of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome," *Mugarnas* 21 (2004): 55–72.
- 86 Siegfried Kratzsch, ed., *Deex Autaer von Philip Angel: Eine niederländische Handschrift aus dem 17. Jahrhundert über die zehn Avatars des Vishnu* (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2007).
- 87 Thus, we may contrast Angel's paintings to those from the *Rāmāyana* illustrations prepared for 'Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan in the late sixteenth century, for a sample of which see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Adventures of Rama* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1983).
- 88 Albert Johannes de Jong, ed., *Afgoderye der Oost-Indische heydenen door Philippus Baldaeus* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1917). The best treatment of the relationship between the works and images of Angel and Baldaeus may be found in Carolien Stolte, "Between Front Page and Back Flap: Philip Angel in the Context of Portuguese and Dutch Writing on Indian Religion" (MA dissertation, Leiden University, 2007).
- 89 See the discussion in Paola von Wyss-Giacosa, *Religionsbilder der frühen Aufklärung: Bernard Picarts Tafeln für die 'Cérémonies et Coutumes religieuses de tous les Peuples du Monde'* (Bern: Benteli Verlag, 2006).
- 90 See the discussion in Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Het Witsenalbum: Zeventiende-eeuwse Indische portretten op bestelling," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 44 (1996): 167–254.
- 91 The best overall survey of the question to date remains the remarkable essay by Ronald W. Lightbown, "Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 228–79.
- 92 "Catalogo di alcune rarità, che il Sig. Abate Co. Giovannantonio Baldini ha riportate da' suoi viaggi, venute principalmente dall'Indie e dalla Cina; indiritto al P. D. Piercaterino Zeno C. R. S. dal Sig. Antonio Vallisnieri, pubblico primario Professore di medicina teorica nello studio di Padova, con lettera data di Padova il dì terzo di novembre, 1719," *Giornale de' Letterati d'Italia* 33, no. 2 (1722): 118–48; "Altra Lettera del Signor Antonio Vallisnieri al Padre D. Piercaterino Zeno, C. R. S. con cui mandagli il Catalogo de' Re del Mogol, i ritratti de' quali serbansi nel ricco museo del Co. Ab. Giovannantonio Baldini," *Supplementi al Giornale de' Letterati d'Italia*, no. 3 (1726): 337–76.
- 93 Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Paris, Smith-Lesouëf 233, described as "Recueil de portraits des rois et des ministres des royaumes musulmans de l'Inde, fin du 17e siècle."
- 94 Cornelius le Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy, Persia, and part of the East-Indies, Containing, an accurate description of whatever is most remarkable in those countries, and embellished with above 320 copper plates*, 2 vols. (London: A. Bettesworth, 1737).
- 95 The reference is to the Bolognese baroque painter Carlo Cignani (1628–1719), on whom see Beatrice Buscaroli Fabbri, *Carlo Cignani: Affreschi, dipinti, disegni* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1991).
- 96 On Picart, see Margaret C. Jacob, "Bernard Picart and the Turn to Modernity," *De achttiende eeuw* 37 (2005): 1–16. I also draw here on Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Monsieur Picart and the Gentiles of India," in *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*, ed. Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt

- (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 197–214.
- 97 Henri Abraham Châtelain, *Atlas historique, ou Nouvelle introduction à l'histoire, à la chronologie & à la géographie ancienne & moderne*, 7 vols. (Amsterdam: Z. Châtelain, 1732–9). Vol. 5, *L'Asie en général & en particulier*.
- 98 These are reproduced in Lightbown, "Oriental Art and the Orient," between pages 264 and 265.
- 99 Lightbown, "Oriental Art and the Orient," 274–5.
- 100 The portraits in BnF, Smith-Lesouëf 233, are frequently characterized by the cataloguer Francis Richard as "grossiers," especially in regard to the backgrounds, lower garments, and shoes, where the painters were clearly negligent.
- 101 Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy*, 220.
- 102 For a more extended discussion, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Further Thoughts on an Enigma: The Tortuous Life of Nicolò Manucci, 1638–ca. 1720," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 45, no. 1 (2008): 35–76.
- 103 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato, Dispacci, Francia, Reg. 203, fols. 271v–72v.
- 104 Koch, "Netherlandish Naturalism in Imperial Mughal Painting," 29, 36. Certainly, there was no full counterpart to the flourishing field of European painting of Ottoman themes, for which see *Image of the Turks in the [sic] 17th century Europe* (Istanbul: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2005); and Karin Ådahl, ed., *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657–1658 and the Rålamb Paintings* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).
- 105 See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Par-delà l'incommensurabilité: Pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 54, no. 5 (2007): 34–53; also Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
- 106 Natasha Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750–1793," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 2 (2006): 227–50.
- 107 For example, see Robert L. Hardgrave Jr., *A Portrait of the Hindus: Balthazar Solvyns & the European Image of India, 1760–1824* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

J.E. Liotard
de Geneve Surnomme'
le Peintre Turc peint
par lui meme a
Vienne 1744



LOOKING EAST

Jean-Étienne Liotard, the Turkish Painter

1 (FACING)

Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Self-portrait*, 1744. Pastel on paper. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, 1890, no.1936. Photograph Scala/Art Resource, NY

Abstract

From 1738 to 1743, the Genevan artist Jean-Étienne Liotard lived and worked in the Ottoman Empire, first in Constantinople and later in Jassy in Moldavia. While there he adopted the Turkish attire that he continued to wear for the rest of his life and that earned him the sobriquet the “Turkish Painter” upon his return to Europe. This paper examines the impact of Liotard’s Ottoman sojourn on his art. It argues that just as the artist’s lived experience of cultural dislocation and of the ethnic and religious diversity of the Ottoman Empire inspired his questioning of European manners and dress, so too did his encounters with Turkish, Persian, and Chinese art lead him to reevaluate the artistic traditions in which he was initially trained and to forge a vaguely “Turkish” style that subtly countered prevailing Western European artistic conventions.

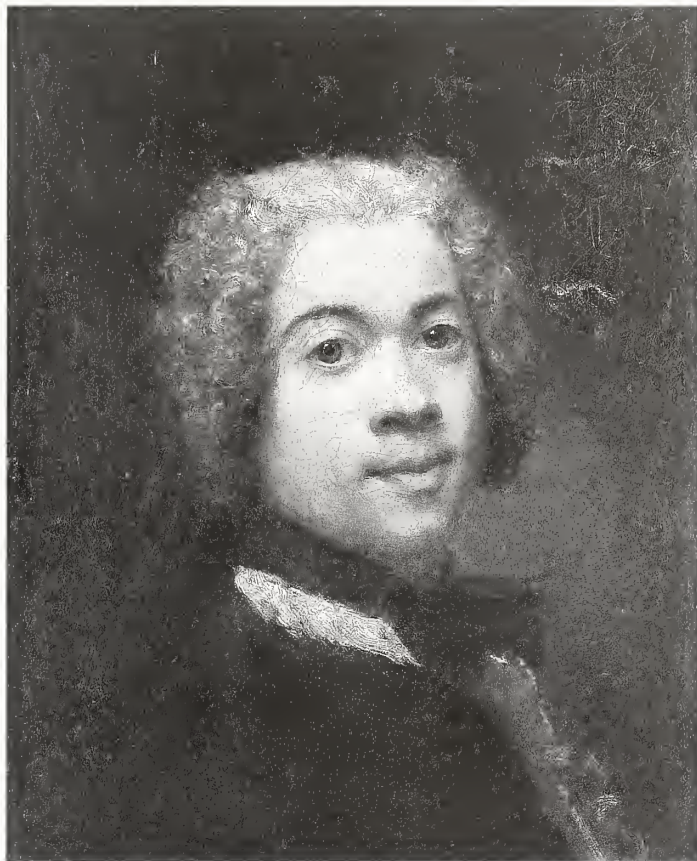
IN 1738, the Genevan artist Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–89) traveled to the Ottoman Empire. This voyage was the defining moment of his career. During his five-year sojourn, primarily in Constantinople and later in the Ottoman vassal state of Moldavia, Liotard established himself as a portraitist and genre painter to the local and expatriate communities, forging connections that would serve him throughout his career. It was also in the Levant that Liotard adopted the Turkish robes and the long beard that caused a sensation on his return to Europe in 1743. He was never to set foot in the empire again, but he retained his Turkish costume and continued to style himself as “le peintre turc” (the Turkish Painter) until his death in 1789 at age 86 (Fig. 1). Looking and behaving unlike anyone else, from 1743 Liotard roamed the courts and capitals of Europe, traveling from Vienna to Paris to London to Amsterdam and back again, capturing public attention with his intriguing strangeness, and ensuring himself a highly successful career despite his lack of the traditional academic credentials.

If Liotard’s appearance was unusual, so too was his art. Eighteenth-century viewers perceived in his paintings and pastels a curious planarity and a willful rejection of the conventions of contemporary European painting—features that were both intriguing and unsettling. To his admirers, Liotard was the “painter of truth,” an unparalleled portraitist with an uncanny ability to capture a likeness and render it with startling directness.¹ Unlike his contemporaries, Liotard refused to flatter his sitters, recording instead, with minute precision, their ruddy complexions, inelegant hands, or pinching bodices. He also eschewed the painterly flourishes characteristic of the work of such rivals as the French pastellist Maurice Quentin de La Tour, producing instead seamless, smooth surfaces devoid of any authorial trace. Liotard’s scrupulous realism and meticulous finish found much

favor among the European art-buying public, but among members of the artistic establishment, particularly in France and England, his work aroused an intense antipathy. Devotees regularly praised Liotard's excellence as a pastellist, his powers of mimesis, and "the astonishing force and beauty" of his color (while consistently also remarking on his equally astonishing prices).² To his academically minded critics, however, Liotard's painstaking observation and fastidious attention to finish recalled craft rather than art; his work represented the antithesis of the effortlessness and "genius" that characterized the liberal artist. Charles-Nicolas Cochin, *secrétaire perpétuel* of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris, complained that Liotard's drawings and pastels were "sans esprit" and so heavily worked that one no longer saw the grain of the paper. He implicitly characterized Liotard's art as naive by comparing it to devotional images executed by nuns.³ The French connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette similarly dismissed Liotard's art as dry, labored, and lacking in inventiveness.⁴ A comment attributed to Joshua Reynolds, first president of the Royal Academy in London, was more pointed: "The only merit in Liotard's pictures is neatness, which, as a general rule, is the characteristic of a low genius, or rather no genius at all."⁵

The comments of other contemporaries, however, suggest that underlying the hostility to (but perhaps also the appreciation of) Liotard's naive or "lowbrow" art was a perception that it was vaguely non-European. Several writers, including Mariette, commented on the flatness of Liotard's figures, a flatness resulting from the artist's disavowal of conventional modeling. At mid-century the connoisseur and theorist Francesco Algarotti favorably compared Liotard's even lighting, a primary source of the sense of planarity in his work, to Chinese painting.⁶ For academicians, Chinese art was not a model to be emulated. In the 1740s the French painter François Boucher was publicly taken to task for his study of Chinese work; one critic feared that Boucher's close attention to Chinese representational modes would compromise the elegance and refinement of his art.⁷ If Asian art held particular attractions for Boucher, it did for Liotard as well, who extolled the visual qualities of Chinese painting in his *Traité des principes et des règles de la peinture* (Treatise on the Principles and Rules of Painting) published in 1781.

References to Chinese art in relation to Liotard's work prompt further speculation as to the sources of his unusual artistic style. If he was familiar with East Asian art, had he also encountered Persian or Ottoman painting? This is not a new question, and the answer remains contested. In the 1940s, writers such as Louis Hautecoeur and Arnold Neuweiler proposed that the lightening of Liotard's palette and the meticulous execution that marks his Ottoman works resulted from his exposure to Persian miniatures in Constantinople.⁸ Recent scholarship is generally more hesitant or openly skeptical. In her indispensable catalogue of Liotard's draw-



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2
Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Self-portrait*, 1727. Oil on canvas. Private collection. After Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 2: fig. 20

ings, Anne de Herdt occasionally implies a relationship between Turkish miniatures (a field of study largely neglected by Hautecoeur and Neuweiler's generation) and Liotard's Ottoman work.⁹ In one entry she directly compares a drawing of a dancer by Liotard to a miniature of a Persian dancer by the Turkish artist Abdülcelil Çelebi, better known as Levni (d. 1732). However, she then denies any relation between the two by arguing that Liotard likely had no access to the Turkish artist's work.¹⁰ The authoritative catalogue raisonné of Liotard's oeuvre published in 2008 is categorical: Liotard "was not inspired by Turkish art, just as he in turn left no trace on Turkish art."¹¹

This paper revisits the debate over the role of Turkish art in Liotard's practice, and argues that the artist's experiences in the Levant and the art he may have encountered there did shape his work and his thinking about the goals of art. It starts from the observations made by Hautecoeur and others that the brilliant coloring, unified surfaces and even lighting that are characteristic of Liotard's oeuvre first emerge as distinctive stylistic features in the works he executed in the Ottoman Empire, and it pursues the lines of inquiry suggested by de Herdt. Although few of Liotard's early works are extant, those miniatures, paintings, and pastels from his pre-Ottoman period that do survive are marked by a reliance on pronounced chiaroscuro and, in the pastels and canvases, a foregrounding of facture (Fig. 2). These qualities exemplify pictorial practice in the Parisian milieu where Liotard completed his training in the 1720s, and both are precepts he would later reject in his published pronouncements and in his art. In contrast to most of his early production, in many of Liotard's Ottoman works the characteristic traits of his later

oeuvre emerge: representations are rigorously descriptive, individual strokes of the crayon or brush are often barely distinguishable, colors are more vibrant and saturated, and strong contrasts of light and shade are largely avoided. Several of Liotard's Ottoman works, particularly his genre scenes, also exhibit a flattening of space and a sense of experiment with perspectival conventions. These features of Liotard's Ottoman oeuvre suggest that he studied non-European art while in the Levant, and that he deliberately integrated some of the distinctive features of the work he encountered there into his own practice.

It is my contention that Liotard's experiences in the Levant prompted his critical engagement with French rococo conventions of picture making and with the Parisian artistic establishment in which he had initially hoped to make his career. This engagement was prompted, I propose, by the cultural dislocation of travel and by his consequent appreciation of artworks from outside the French academic canon (Ottoman, Chinese, and seventeenth-century Dutch painting, for example), and the visual truths he perceived in them.¹² In this view, just as Liotard's lived experience of the religious and ethnic diversity of the Ottoman Empire seems to have inspired his questioning of European mores and sartorial norms, so too did his encounters with Turkish, Persian, and Chinese art lead him to reevaluate the European artistic traditions in which he was schooled, and to craft a style that subtly countered contemporary academic artistic conventions.

The European–Ottoman encounter was sustained over the entire early modern period, but European interest in the Turks seems to have sharpened into fascination in the eighteenth century. From the coffee house, an import from the Ottoman Empire, to masquerades, theatrical performances, and visual representations of sultanas and seraglios, the figure of the Turk was ubiquitous in eighteenth-century European culture. This level of engagement with Turkish difference was made possible, in the conventional view, by the ebbing of the military threat that the Ottomans presented to Europe after the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, and by the much-publicized Turkish embassies to Paris in 1721 and 1742. This, however, cannot be a full explanation for the fascination exerted by Turkish society on the European imagination. Despite the Ottoman Empire's military decline, it remained a power with which European governments had to reckon. It has recently been suggested that the monarchy of Louis XV worked deliberately to improve the image of the Turk in Europe in order to legitimate and deepen France's close diplomatic ties with Constantinople.¹³ Beyond diplomacy, however, it seems that a space began to open in European elite culture in the mid-eighteenth century making it possible for Europeans to recognize and value cultural difference without assimilating it either to the category of nature (the noble savage) or to universal civilizational standards (as in Enlightenment conjectural history).¹⁴ In assessing Liotard's work, I share the

view of scholars who interpret the eighteenth century as a period defined less by the Orientalist binaries of East and West/Europe and Other than by a reciprocal cultural curiosity between Ottomans and Europeans, or between the Chinese and their European counterparts.¹⁵ Liotard represents a notable instance of this mutual cultural interest: in his reception by both locals and expatriates in the empire, in his subsequent career as a “Turkish” painter in Europe, and in his art.

In the Ottoman Empire

According to Liotard, his voyage to the Levant was the result of a chance encounter. After failing to forge a successful career for himself in Paris, he accepted the invitation of the French ambassador to the Neapolitan court to accompany him to Italy. It was there that Liotard met William Ponsonby, the future Lord Bessborough, and John Montagu, Lord Sandwich, the two grand tourists in whose employ he was to travel to the Ottoman Empire in 1738.¹⁶ According to Sandwich, Liotard’s brief on this voyage was “to draw the dresses of every country they should go into; to take prospects of all the remarkable places which had made a figure in history; and to preserve in their memories, by the help of painting, those noble remains of antiquity which they went in quest of.”¹⁷ Whether Liotard ever drew any antiquities or ancient sites is unknown—none are extant—but several annotated and dated costume studies remain that are surely associated with his work for the two men. These are precisely detailed drawings executed in the red and black chalk technique that Liotard adapted from the example of Antoine Watteau, whose studies Liotard had seen in Paris and whose work he actively collected.¹⁸ The last of Liotard’s costume sheets is dated September 1738, around the time that the Englishmen returned to Italy. (Sandwich traveled to Egypt the following year.) Liotard, however, remained in the empire for five years, having been released from his employers’ service through the intervention of Everard Fawkener, the British ambassador to the Porte.¹⁹

Liotard appeared in Constantinople at a propitious moment. In 1737, the year prior to his arrival, the Flemish artist Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, who had been the resident Western painter to the diplomatic community for nearly thirty-eight years, had died.²⁰ In his place, Liotard became the painter of choice to European expatriates (including members of the Austrian, Dutch, English, French, Swedish, and Venetian embassies) and an active participant in their social life.²¹ As representatives of their monarchs, European ambassadors generally did not adopt local dress. Other resident Franks (Europeans) and travelers, however, like Sandwich, Ponsonby, or the archaeologist Richard Pococke did, often commissioning Liotard to record for posterity their embrace of local sartorial codes. These commissions resulted in such stunning, highly finished works as Liotard’s life-size portrait of



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Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Richard Pococke*, 1740. Oil on canvas. Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, 1948-22. Photograph © Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva

Pococke in his Turkish traveling robes and turban from 1740 (Fig. 3), and a much smaller painting from the same period painted for the French ambassador, the marquis de Villeneuve, representing Mlle Glavani, daughter of the former French consul in the Crimea, and Mr. Levett, an English merchant in Constantinople, attired in local dress (Fig. 4).²² In the latter especially, a work measuring only 24.7 by 36.4 centimeters, all of Liotard's gifts as a miniaturist are brought to bear on his description of embroidery and inlay, metal, and fur. Both paintings are replete with carefully rendered identifiers of place—a composite view of the Golden Horn in the former and precisely delineated Turkish furnishings and instruments in the latter—and both exhibit the physiognomic exactitude that would come to characterize Liotard's portrait practice. More than mere likenesses, however, such images of cultural cross-dressing visualize the traveler or expatriate imagining identity in relation, rather than in opposition, to an other.²³ In the eighteenth century, one could be, as Liotard emphasized in his self-representation, both a Genevan and a Turk, a "peintre turc de Genève" (see Fig. 1).

Liotard's Ottoman oeuvre shows that such curiosity was bi-directional. In the empire, Turks and Moldavians sat to Liotard for portraits executed accorded to European conventions. His extant works show that his Ottoman sitters included the grand vizier, one of the most powerful men in the empire, as well as several other officials and members of the sultan's household including one "Sadig Aga," identified by Liotard as "treasurer of the mosques," and Ibrahim, one of the sultan's dwarves.²⁴ The artist was called to Moldavia by the reigning prince to serve as the



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Jean-Étienne Liotard, *M. Levett and Mlle Glavani in Turkish Costume*, ca. 1740. Oil on card. Musée du Louvre, Paris, RF 1995-14. Photograph Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY

court's artist. While in Jassy, the capital, he executed portraits of his patron and various other members of the court. It was there, in emulation of the local nobility, that Liotard grew his beard.²⁵ Liotard recounted that a *defterdar* (a member of the Ottoman financial administration) requested the artist demonstrate his working methods for him, which apparently required an unfortunate model to remain motionless for two hours.²⁶ There is also evidence that local artists may have used Liotard's works as models for their own. A copy of Liotard's study of a Greek woman, Signora Maroudia, included in an album of miniatures now in the Topkapı Palace Library in Istanbul, suggests that artists working in Constantinople appreciated Liotard's costume studies. The miniature has been dated to circa 1770, a date that suggests Liotard's drawings were in circulation in the city long after the artist left.²⁷

If locals had access to Liotard's work, the artist himself would have had occasion to see illustrated Persian and Ottoman manuscripts as well as single-page miniatures produced in Constantinople for local and expatriate consumption. While de Herdt is probably correct in assuming that Liotard could not have seen Levni's *Persian Dancer*—the work was part of an album created for the sultan and would almost certainly have been inaccessible to the Genevan—Levni did produce individual costume plates for other patrons. As Gül İrepoğlu has argued, these patrons may have included Europeans living in Constantinople.²⁸ Liotard could also have seen work by Levni, his school, or by other earlier or contemporary Ottoman and Persian artists in the *murakkas* (albums of bound materials including individual miniatures from different regions and periods) of court officials. The copy after



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Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Woman Taking Tea*, 1738–42. Red and black chalk on paper. Oskar Reinhart Foundation, Winterthur.

Liotard's drawing of Signora Maroudia is included in just such an album, alongside miniatures by Levni and Abdullah Buhari, a painter active in Constantinople from circa 1735 to 1745 (thus contemporaneous with Liotard), who seems to have specialized in individual costume plates of women.²⁹ We know from the manuscript account of the scholar Marco Antonio Cazzaiti that he and Liotard visited at least one library in Constantinople in the company of Nicola Erizzo, the Venetian bailo. The library has been identified as that founded by the Grand Vizier Damad Ibrahim Paşa in 1720; Cazzaiti described it as consisting of richly bound Arab, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts.³⁰ Recent research on Ibrahim Paşa's personal collection and those of other court officials indicates that they owned numerous illustrated manuscripts and albums of images.³¹ Liotard could also have encountered miniatures in the ateliers of local artists. Later in the century, the Italian Jesuit Giambattista Toderini saw Turkish paintings in the possession of a court painter, the Ottoman Armenian Menasi. Toderini also recounted viewing numerous books filled with figures in the possession of his Turkish friends, and recalled encountering paintings by a Persian dervish in cafés and barber shops.³² Persian and Ottoman works were also available for purchase in Constantinople. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, successive French envoys bought manuscripts, including illustrated ones, for the Royal Library in Paris. During Liotard's sojourn, the marquis de Villeneuve and his successor, the comte de Castellane, were charged with such acquisitions, and any purchases they made would have passed through the French embassy where Liotard could have seen them.³³ Judging from the manuscripts and miniatures acquired by Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, the Prussian *chargé d'affaires* at the Sublime Porte from 1786 to 1790, a wide variety of visual material was available in the city. Now in Berlin, Diez's albums show that he acquired Ottoman, Qajar, and Chinese works in Constantinople, as well as illustrated manuscripts and materials extracted from albums in the Topkapı Palace.³⁴



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Musavvir Hüseyin, *Haseki Sultan with Attendant*. Miniature from *Figures naturelles de Turquie par Raynal*, 1688. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Estampes, Od. 7, plate 20.



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Musavvir Hüseyin, *Musicians*. Miniature from *Costumes turcs de la Cour et de la ville de Constantinople en 1720*, ca. 1720. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Estampes, Od. 6, plate 3.



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Musavvir Hüseyin, *Embroiderer*. Miniature from *Costumes turcs de la Cour et de la ville de Constantinople en 1720*, ca. 1720. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Estampes, Od. 6, plate 30.

Finally, the existence in European collections today of numerous costume books and individual plates by Ottoman “bazaar artists” testifies to the continuing consumption of depictions of Ottoman types by expatriates, particularly among the diplomatic communities with which Liotard was intimately associated.³⁵

Given the inaccessibility of Muslim women in the empire, representations of them in Turkish costume plates and miniatures must have been especially appealing to foreigners. Frankish men could encounter Muslim women only through images, and both Ottoman and European artists, Liotard included, were happy to supply them. Liotard’s many representations of women were necessarily staged fictions using Greek or Frankish women as his models and illustrations as sources for their poses and clothes. As scholars have noted, some of his sources were European. Drawings such as his detailed study of two women playing a game of mangala or of a servant offering tea to a seated woman (Fig. 5) are visual quotations from the most popular book of Levantine costume published in the eighteenth century: *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes nations du Levant*, commonly referred to as the *Recueil Ferriol*. This was a book of one hundred prints of Levantine dress etched after paintings by Vanmour. It was first published in Paris in 1714–15 on the initiative of the marquis de Ferriol, a former French ambassador to the Ottoman court, who had commissioned the paintings while in Constantinople.³⁶ The *Recueil* was useful, but one can well imagine the attractions of seemingly more authentic sources, such as miniatures by Turkish artists like Levni, Buhari, or the bazaar artists.

Liotard’s encounters with Persian and Turkish painting might help to explain the vibrant colorism and the spatial ambiguities of his own Ottoman production. Neither the rich color nor the planarity, nor the blank backgrounds that characterize much of Liotard’s work in the empire, could have been derived from books like the *Recueil*. All of these features, however, are characteristic of Ottoman miniatures, especially costume plates. Two particularly fine costume books, now in Paris, exemplify qualities of Ottoman art that, I suggest, are echoed in Liotard’s production. Both have been attributed to the Ottoman painter Musavvir Hüseyin, who is credited as a formative example for Levni and other lesser-known miniaturists of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.³⁷ Liotard could not have seen

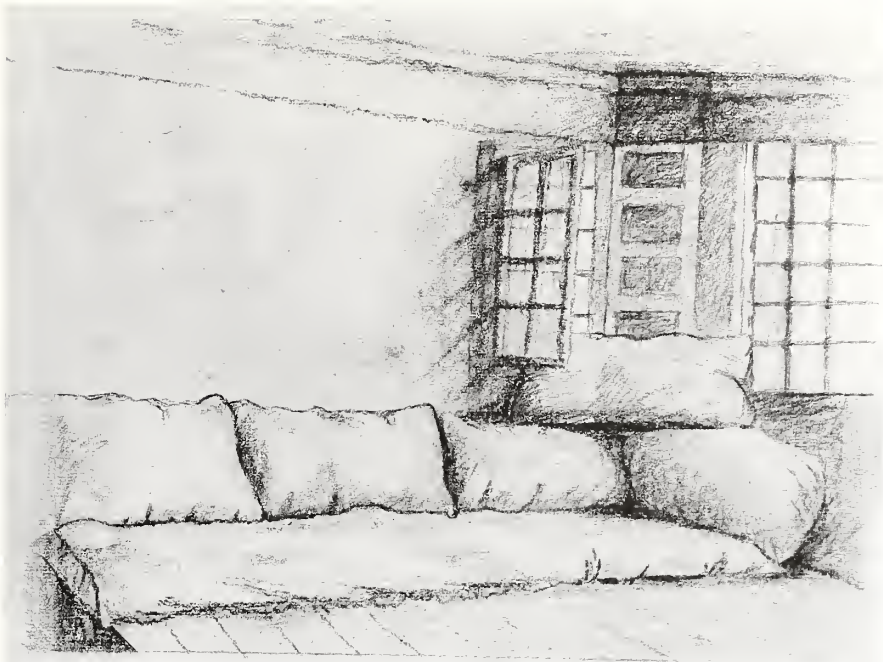


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Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Frankish Woman and her Servant*, 1742-3.
Pastel on parchment. Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, 1936-17.
Photograph © Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva

either book as both were exported to Paris before his arrival, but Hüseyin's plates are indicative both of the kinds of subjects Liotard could have encountered in Ottoman painting and of the formal qualities to which he seems to have responded. Both books feature brilliantly colored plates of members of the imperial household as well as several of Turkish women playing musical instruments, drinking coffee, visiting the hammam, and working at their embroidery frames (Figs. 6, 7, 8). These are standard subjects of Ottoman costume books and of Liotard's representations of Turkish women. But in Hüseyin's works, as in Levni's and Buhari's, we also encounter sophisticated juxtapositions of unmodulated planes of color—of bright oranges, reds, pinks, and blues, for example—set against the blank expanse of the white support. Liotard's work does not directly imitate such miniatures, but his pastels of Ottoman themes suggest his receptivity to their particular beauties. Works such as the *Frankish Woman and her Servant* (Fig. 9) suggest he adapted miniaturist procedures of East and West to the larger formats and technique of the pastel medium, fusing the brilliant colorism and blank backgrounds of Ottoman costume plates with the high finish and greater reliance on shading characteristic of European enamels, the medium in which Liotard was first trained.

One of the most striking features of Liotard's Ottoman oeuvre is his representation of space. Flouting Western perspectival conventions, Liotard frequently flattens the settings of his drawings, pastels, and paintings of this period. Liotard was



Chambre du premier Liotard à Constantinople.

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Jean-Étienne Liotard, *The Divan*.
Liotard's Bedroom in Constantinople,
ca. 1742. Red chalk and graphite
pencil on paper. Musée d'art et
d'histoire, Geneva, 1934–33.
Photograph © Musée d'art et
d'histoire, Geneva



11

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Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Corfiz*
Anton, Count Ulfeld, Austrian
Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire,
1740–41. Gouache and watercolor
on parchment. Private collection.
Photograph courtesy Sotheby's
Picture Library, London

quite capable of convincingly rendering recession into depth; one need only look at his drawing of a Turkish village, for example, or of three-dimensional objects such as chairs and embroidery frames.³⁸ Yet in many of his Ottoman works, space is often indeterminate and difficult to decipher. Thus, in Liotard's study of his bedroom in Constantinople, it is difficult to read the walls as meeting at all (Fig. 10).³⁹ Indeed, it is tempting to read the working and reworking of the "corner" of the room as an attempt to flatten it, to undo or unlearn a way of seeing conditioned by Western perspectivalism. Many of his Ottoman drawings exhibit a similar refusal to clearly delineate the boundaries of pictorial space. Liotard's large expanses of blankness, for instance, confound the expectation among European viewers of an illusion of recession into depth. Corners of rooms, when they are indicated at all, are represented by a straight line or perfunctory shading (see Fig. 5), and the presumed meeting points of floors and walls are barely noted, if at all. In one particularly detailed small portrait representing Count Ulfeld, the Holy Roman Emperor's ambassador to the Porte, the viewer is led to read the box-like object, perhaps a writing desk, at bottom right as located against a wall (Fig. 11). Following the object's orthogonal lines, however, leads the eye to a wall running parallel to the picture plane. Where one would expect the side and back walls to meet, where one would expect a corner, there is none.⁴⁰ A similar ambiguity characterizes Liotard's Turkish bath scene of a woman and her servant (see Fig. 9). There the lightly drawn, receding grid of the tiled floor soon dissolves into flatness. The floor is tilted upward and there is little sense of it meeting a wall. Even more surprisingly, the vertical walls against which the basin seems to stand (if one follows the lines of the flooring) have disappeared entirely.

Comparisons with specific Ottoman miniatures highlight Liotard's experimentation with the themes and formal innovations of the images he encountered in Constantinople. Although largely European in medium and execution, Liotard's



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Abdullah Buhari, *Woman in the Hamman*, 1741–2. Watercolor on paper, heightened with gold. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, YY1043. Photograph Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY

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Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Embroiderer*, 1738. Black and red chalk on paper. Musée du Louvre, Paris, RF 1370. Photograph Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY

Turkish bath scene exhibits the same planar background, unified lighting, and deployment of multiple shades of white found in Buhari's well-known *Woman in the Hamman* (Fig. 12). It also exhibits a representation of space similar, but not identical to, that in Buhari's image. There are resonances in Liotard's pastel of the tilted perspective of Buhari's floor and platform, and the more empirical (rather than mathematical) representation of the wall fountain. (For a similar use of multiple whites and tilted perspective, see Liotard's *Woman in a Turkish Interior*, Fig. 16.) In Liotard's hammam scene a tension is created by the juxtaposition of vague space with fully modeled figures. In some of Liotard's Ottoman drawings, this oscillation between planarity and illusionism is particularly acute. In *Woman Taking Tea*, the planar emphasis of the blank wall and the strict profile view of the servant are in tension with the receding volume of the sofa (see Fig. 5).⁴¹ In one of his studies of an embroiderer, the woman is conventionally modeled, but the frame on which she works is skewed and flattened (Fig. 13). This striking disregard for conventional perspective has been described as proto-modernist,⁴² but Turkish images provide a closer point of comparison. Liotard's depiction is analogous, for example, to the point of view adopted in Musavvir Hüseyin's painting of an embroiderer (see Fig. 8).⁴³ To an audience versed in European perspectival conventions, Liotard's obliquely rendered frame surely connoted difference as much as did the dress and pose of the embroiderer in the Ottoman miniature.

The “Turkish Painter”

Upon his arrival in Vienna in 1743, Liotard astutely parlayed his “Turkishness” into a stunning and almost immediate commercial success. By 1744, he was commissioned by Franz Stefan, Grand Duke of Tuscany and the future Holy Roman Emperor, to execute a likeness of himself for the gallery of celebrated artists’ self-portraits in the Uffizi in Florence (see Fig. 1).⁴⁴ By 1751, when Liotard was in Paris, he was in a position to invest substantial sums in annuities, sums that by the standards of mid-eighteenth-century incomes in France attest to the extraordinary fees he demanded for his work and the willingness of his patrons to pay them.⁴⁵ The vehemence of his academic detractors, who must have found Liotard’s command of the market galling, is in stark contrast to the appreciation of his work by the picture-buying public.

That Liotard achieved such prominence in eighteenth-century Europe is testament to the period’s intense interest in the Ottoman Turks and their customs. The Ottoman Empire was both a locus of European fantasy projection (as exemplified by the fascination with the harem) and, as a geographically proximate example of the global diversity of manners, a site of European recognition that it was but one society among many.⁴⁶ Liotard was well placed to cater to European curiosity about the empire both in his person and his art. He exhibited his Ottoman drawings throughout his career, showing them in public venues in Paris and London and making them available to visitors to his studio. He further capitalized on his Ottoman studies by circulating prints after them, describing the etchings in the accompanying texts as “dessiné d’après nature” (drawn from life), or in the case of a print after his portrait of the sultan’s dwarf “dessiné dans le serail” (drawn in the seraglio).⁴⁷ He also brought costumes back with him from Turkey, and numerous European sitters who never ventured East donned them for their portraits, thus memorializing their brief engagement of an other.

Liotard also brought himself. It is hard to overestimate what a strange figure he must have cut in the streets of Vienna, Paris, London, and the other European cities he visited. Where refined Western European men were clean-shaven and wore knee breeches, stockings, elegant coats, cuffs, and powdered wigs, Liotard went wigless and wore long baggy pants, a flowing caftan, outlandish hats and, most unusual of all, an increasingly long beard. In an era in which a clean-shaven face was considered a sign of civility in Western Europe, Liotard’s beard, hanging down to his waist, was shocking.⁴⁸ As the numerous images of him with it attest, the beard fascinated his European patrons. (He shaved off his beard in 1756, an event that made the London newspapers; his later self-portraits show him smooth-cheeked but in Turkish dress.) His many self-portrait miniatures and pastels suggest he had no qualms about turning himself into a curiosity for the collector’s cabinet. Artists, too, were

taken with him; there is probably no other eighteenth-century painter who was as frequently depicted by others.⁴⁹

Liotard performed his Turkishness in many ways, and he did so until the end of his life. In addition to his clothing, he used a seal whose Arabic characters spell his name. It is unclear when he began using it, but the earliest extant example is on a letter dated 1777, when Liotard was in his seventies.⁵⁰ He also behaved in ways that deliberately countered European ideas of decorum. A sketch by an unknown English artist, dated 1755, shows Liotard asleep, seated cross-legged on a cushion or on the floor, a pose in which no polite European male would have sat.⁵¹ This was as clear a marker of assumed otherness as his clothing; in the 1770s while living in Italy, the Arabist and convert to Islam, Edward Wortley Montagu (son of the more well-known traveler Lady Mary Wortley Montagu), also dressed like a Turk and reportedly received visitors sitting on the floor.⁵² In Liotard's case, his Turkishness was an astute form of marketing; it was well suited, as one commentator wrote, to succeed among the French who were easily taken in by appearances.⁵³ But it may also have been something more. It is tempting to see in Liotard's Turkish persona, and his flouting of social convention, a deliberate self-construction as an outside observer whose very presence, like the many Persian and Chinese visitors to Europe familiar from eighteenth-century fiction, held up a mirror to the arbitrariness of European mores. His communication with Jean-Jacques Rousseau is suggestive in this regard. Liotard's claims to the philosopher that he sought to "think purely, naturally and without any preconceptions," and "to think like animals do, without bad habits and preconceptions," suggest that he admired Rousseau's critique of European civilization.⁵⁴

A similar resistance to eighteenth-century Western European, and particularly French, artistic conventions subtly reveals itself in the style of Liotard's post-Ottoman works. When eighteenth-century viewers looked at pictures like Liotard's so-called *Chocolate Girl*, they saw qualities that may not be evident to us now (Fig. 14). Executed in Vienna in 1744, shortly after his return to Europe, this picture of a Viennese servant carrying a cup of chocolate and a glass of water is a masterful demonstration of the artist's fastidious pastel technique and his powers of observation. It can also be read as exemplifying the "Turkish's Painter's" "Turkish" art. The connoisseur Francesco Algarotti suggested that the *Chocolate Girl* would appeal to non-Western eyes, and as many scholars have noted, Liotard adapted the Viennese model's pose from a counterproof of the Ottoman servant in his *Woman Taking Tea* (see Fig. 5). Algarotti, who bought the pastel for the Saxon royal collection in 1745, described his purchase in a letter to Pierre-Jean Mariette in terms that capture the unusual qualities he perceived in the work: "This picture is almost without shadows on a light background ... the whole is worked in half-tones and in imperceptible



14

14

Jean-Étienne Liotard, *The Chocolate Girl*, 1744–5. Pastel on parchment. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, P 161. Photograph Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY

gradations of light and in admirable relief. It expresses an absolutely unmannered nature, and although completely European, it would greatly please even the Chinese, confirmed enemies, as you know, of shading. As for its extremely high finish ... it is a Holbein in pastel.⁵⁵

The comparison to the sixteenth-century artist Hans Holbein would undoubtedly have pleased Liotard for whom intense pictorial realism and smooth finish (both defining characteristics of Holbein's work) represented an antidote to the extravagances and artificiality he perceived in contemporary French art; he would later praise seventeenth-century Dutch painting for the same reason. Liotard began to attack rococo art in print in the 1760s. The *touche* or visible stroke, a visual flourish characteristic of much eighteenth-century art and the mode in which Liotard initially worked, was, in his later view, profoundly unnatural. He first published his thoughts on the proper processes and functions of painting in the journal the *Mercur de France* in 1762. He then developed his critique at length in his *Traité des principes et des règles de la peinture* published in 1781. "Nature has no *touches*," he wrote, and therefore there should be none in painting.⁵⁶ To paint a portrait with them was akin to representing a sitter with the marks of smallpox when they in fact had none. To paint with *touches* was faster and thus more lucrative, but the result was antithetic to how humans actually see. Violent contrasts of light and dark

were equally contrary to nature, as was a lack of finish; excessive use of half-tones only made a painting look dirty. Painting demanded truth to vision, a painstakingly descriptive approach to nature that was characteristic of Northern European painting and best exemplified, in Liotard's view, by the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century.⁵⁷

Liotard's championing of Dutch art is not unrelated to his Levantine sojourn; it was in the Ottoman Empire that Liotard adopted the carefully descriptive mode that came to define his art and that he later equated with Dutch painting. In his drawings of the late 1730s and early 1740s, for example, one can trace a turn away from the more conventional cross-hatching of his early work towards the refined, pointillist technique, adapted from his training as a miniaturist, that gives his drawings of Ottoman subjects their uncanny realism and presence.⁵⁸ This increasing emphasis on description and the corresponding suppression of the artistic trace in his graphic work can be credited to the changes in perception (and self-perception) that accompany the traveler's acceptance of dislocation. A similar turn to the reproduction of optical experience marks the prose of one of the more famous eighteenth-century travelers to the Levant, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762), who accompanied her husband, the English ambassador, to Constantinople in 1717–18, and whose account of these years was published posthumously in 1763. As Mary Jo Kietzman has argued, Montagu's way of seeing, as expressed in the narrative style of her letters, changed as she traveled eastward and began to acknowledge, and then accept, her position as a dislocated subject. As she attempted to abandon her ethnocentric biases her text became increasingly descriptive. These descriptions wavered between rendering meaning and rendering surface, as she distanced herself, struggled to stop assimilating what she saw to her own categories and foregrounded the "objects" of her gaze.⁵⁹ It seems plausible to interpret the emphasis on surface and the seemingly unmediated reproduction of optical experience that emerges in Liotard's Ottoman work as a similar product of the foreigner's acceptance of his cultural dislocation, of his position on the margins of a culture he does not fully understand. For Liotard, as for Montagu before him, this was a position that led him to interrogate his own cultural and artistic codes. His years in the empire can be read as having altered the way he saw the world, and transformed the way he viewed European art.

The *Chocolate Girl* suggests the extent to which Liotard's experiences in the Levant prompted him to reassess rococo pictorial modes and to look at European artistic traditions in a new way. For Algarotti, Liotard's exceptionally subtle modeling in the *Chocolate Girl* was admirable and unusual. The picture was European, but at the same time, it seemed vaguely not to be, as the connoisseur's reference to Chinese painting indicates. Algarotti's comment captures the subtle play of illusion

and planarity (of the tilted floor and light, blank background) that, combined with the meticulous description of details like the creases of the servant's apron, the distorted reflection of her hand through the water glass, and the recognizable pattern of the porcelain, gives the work its impressive presence and exceptional illusionism. There is relief in the figure, but it is achieved through a conscious disavowal of strong chiaroscuro and a minimal use of shading that gives the pastel a quality akin (but not equivalent) to the shadowless styles equated by Liotard's contemporaries with non-European art. In this sense, one can interpret the uncommissioned *Chocolate Girl* as a programmatic statement of Liotard's "Turkishness," represented this time not by the artist's costume or his subject but his pictorial style.

While Algarotti enthused over the *Chocolate Girl*, others were less charitable towards the two-dimensionality they perceived in Liotard's works. The abbé Jean-Bernard Le Blanc, a contemporary writer on the arts, spluttered with rage when he saw Liotard's self-portrait in the Uffizi in 1751 (see Fig. 1). In a letter to Quentin de La Tour, he belittled Liotard as a *chianlit*, a derogatory reference to Liotard's "carnivalesque" masquerading both as a Turk and as an important artist.⁶⁰ The abbé went on to forcefully disparage Liotard's pastel: "I was very scandalized to see the portrait of the *chianlit*, who calls himself the Turkish painter. It is the worst he has ever made; it is *plat*, *plat*, *plat*, three times *plat* and of everything that has ever existed the most *plat*."⁶¹ Read figuratively, *plat* can be interpreted as "dull," and compared with the coloristic, virtuoso flourishes of La Tour, the pastel no doubt appeared to Le Blanc as painstakingly craftsmanlike, and hence dull, in its execution and in its muted color.⁶² (Liotard's palette here is exceptionally restricted in comparison with his other post-Ottoman works, including his other self-portraits. One wonders if he deemed such subdued color as more appropriate for the Uffizi gallery.) Comments by Liotard's contemporaries, however, also authorize a reading of *plat* in its more literal sense of flat. After remarking on the "gingerbread coloring" of Liotard's works, Mariette observed that his heads seemed "without roundness."⁶³ A seeming lack of volume is perceptible in several of the artist's figures. A striking example is his pastel portrait from 1760 of Isaac-Louis de Thellusson, a prominent Genevan (Fig. 15). Here Liotard's even lighting flattens the sitter's face while at the same time it highlights the magnificent blue of his silk attire. A thin edge of shading along the side of the sitter's face differentiates his head from the light background. This quasi-outline heightens the effect of planarity in the work, and the result is a head that can appear lacking in mass when compared with the portraiture of Liotard's French and English contemporaries. His Uffizi self-portrait, by contrast, is among the more conventionally modeled of his portrait heads. Nevertheless, as in the *Chocolate Girl*, there is an oscillation between relief and planarity, between the flatness of the picture plane emphasized by the artist's prominent signature and the



15

15

Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Isaac-Louis de Thellusson*, 1760. Pastel on parchment. Oskar Reinhart Foundation, Winterthur.

coming into illusion of his carefully modeled face and fur hat and the fading back into two-dimensionality of his comparatively incorporeal body.⁶⁴

The planarity some of Liotard's contemporaries perceived in his work was the result of the subtle, careful modeling techniques the artist described at length in his *Traité*. A passage in the same text suggests that his approach to illusionism, and the light and color from which it was conjured, was stimulated by his appreciation of the art of other cultures. While Liotard derided the "pockmarked" portraits by Rembrandt, a seventeenth-century Dutch artist who did not work in a Northern descriptive mode, he praised the visual pleasures of Chinese paintings.⁶⁵ (By these Liotard presumably meant those on porcelain and in Chinese woodcuts and export watercolors.) Chinese paintings are admirable, Liotard wrote, because they are "smooth, clean, neat," and this "makes us find them agreeable even though," as he went on to claim, "they are made by peoples without a smattering of art."⁶⁶ The passage follows immediately after Liotard's invocation of the work of Jan van Huysum, the seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painter whose work he held up as a model of perfection. While apparently unwilling to grant Chinese painters parity with their European confreres, he extolled their art, like Van Huysum's, as exemplifying qualities instinctively appreciated by the *ignorant*, Liotard's idiosyncratic term for untrained viewers. Uncorrupted by a blind adherence to European artistic conven-

tions, the *ignorart*'s response to an artwork was spontaneous and natural; in the context of Liotard's pointed rejection of artistic authority, the untutored viewer rather than the academician or connoisseur was a more honest guide to what was truthful in art. In this sense the lack of art in Chinese painting was the point, for it was its artlessness, its lack of visible brushstrokes, its even lighting, and brilliant colors, to which the *ignorart* instinctively responded.⁶⁷ The positive response of the *ignorart* to Chinese art suggests that truth in painting—to the nature of vision and the outward appearance of things—although abandoned by Liotard's European contemporaries, could be found in the works of non-European artists. In their art, then, lay a potential corrective to the problems of contemporary European painting.

An equivalence between Chinese and Turkish art forms was a given for some eighteenth-century European writers. China and Turkey were often conflated in traveler's accounts of Turkish architecture as they were in descriptions of Chinese buildings.⁶⁸ Although suggestive of an exoticist melding of different societies, such remarks suggest that eighteenth-century viewers perceived a stylistic affinity between the two cultures, and a sense of the possibility of a movement between them, that is lost to us now but may have been operative in Liotard's evocation of Chinese art.⁶⁹ A similar conflation occurs in Liotard's art. A pastel of his wife, Marie Fargues, in Turkish costume, executed circa 1756–8, features the oblique view, the blank background, and the robes, cushions, and carpets that are a staple of Liotard's Turkish-themed portraits (Fig. 16).⁷⁰ But it also includes a Chinese porcelain vase with brilliantly colored figures in the right foreground, an inclusion that contributes an additional signifier of otherness to the pastel while also alluding to the multiple potential sources of Liotard's art.

If Turkish images provided rich subject matter, like Chinese art, their bold coloring and relative planarity might also have offered a different model for painting, one that the artist incorporated into the diverse mix of pictorial traditions that informed his art. Liotard's smoothly executed expanses of vibrant color, the fluctuation between two- and three-dimensionality in some of his works, and the frequent delineation of form, as in the faces of his sitters, through dark contours set against a light background (see Fig. 15) might well have struck some viewers, as Algarotti's comments attest, as wholly European and yet vaguely other. Such a perception could have been reinforced by Liotard's preference for profile or three-quarter views. Along with inconsistent perspective, European commentators singled out the prevalence of these poses in Turkish and Persian miniatures as a defining feature of their authors' inability to model or draw "correctly"; at the same time, such writers marveled at the brilliance and durability of the colors in Persian and Ottoman paintings.⁷¹ Viewers may have perceived some of the same features in Liotard's work, a recognition encouraged by the "Turkishness" of the artist himself.

Liotard's engagement with the art of other societies was more subtle than his engagement with European traditions of picture making, and I am far from claiming that the art he may have seen in the Levant was the only determining element in his mature style and thinking. The striking diversity of Liotard's oeuvre resulted as much from his lifelong experimentation with media and technique and his adaptation of representational conventions to suit the exigencies of specific commissions and sitters as it did from his encounter with non-European art.⁷² However, it may well have been the visual pleasures of Ottoman or Persian or Chinese art that first prompted him to transpose some of the qualities of the miniature technique in which he was initially trained—vibrant color, unified surfaces, and detailed observation—to large-scale works, and upon his return from the empire, to look to Northern European descriptive pictorial traditions rather than academically sanctioned models for inspiration and for the justification of his own art. In this sense, we can read the dislocations of travel as having led Liotard to aspire to see “purely, naturally and without preconceptions,” as he wrote to Rousseau. In 1752, the French architect and academician, Pierre de Vigny, who had traveled to Constantinople in the early 1720s, articulated a similar sense of beauty as relative.⁷³ In his remarkable “Dissertation sur l'architecture,” Vigny extolled the qualities of Ottoman, Chinese, and Gothic architecture, arguing that it was the servitude of French architects to the authority of the antique and the academic canon—a servitude he explicitly related to their failure to travel—that prevented the French from appreciating the splendors of buildings from other cultures and time periods and learning from their examples. Vigny's further claim that the *parterre* (the public standing in the pits of theatres and thus the holders of the cheapest tickets) was a better judge of architecture than the experts is analogous to Liotard's invocation of the *ignorant*.⁷⁴

Perhaps, too, the receptivity of some of Liotard's many European patrons to his art extended beyond the pleasures of masquerade or the capturing of a likeness to his very style of painting. It is possible that, allied to the frisson of being painted by a “Turk” was the pleasure of being represented in a vaguely “Turkish” idiom, whether one was in costume or not. Like his desired construction of a hybrid subjectivity, Liotard's work attests to the potential heterogeneity of eighteenth-century artistic forms; it speaks to the possibility of multilateral processes of artistic exchange. The claim that European artists drew upon Asian, Indian, and Ottoman models to create hybrid, or transcultural, works is unproblematic to historians of eighteenth-century European textiles and decorative arts. Porcelain, for example, was an utterly transcultural form.⁷⁵ Among historians of European painting there is more resistance to such a view, and indeed it would be difficult to name another artist quite like Liotard. Painting was the most heavily policed of the eighteenth-century visual arts. Its



16

16

Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Woman in a Turkish Interior*, 1756–8. Pastel on vellum. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-240.

norms were shaped by powerful academic structures, and it was probably Liotard's exclusion from such institutional settings that permitted him to preserve the openness that gives his art its transcultural dimension. Released from these strictures and altered by the experience of travel, Liotard was free to do what artists working in other branches of the visual arts did as a matter of course, and his enormous commercial success speaks to the enthusiastic response of a European public.

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NOTES

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- 1 "Le virtuosissime Liotard ... est le Peintre de la vérité." The author went on to claim, no doubt on Liotard's authority, that the latter's talents were such that "à Venise et à Milan la plupart des femmes de moyenne beauté trembloient de se laisser peindre par lui." Pierre Paul Clément, letter CVII, Paris, 1 Sept. 1752, in *Les cinq années littéraires ou lettres de M. Clément sur les ouvrages de littérature qui ont paru dans les années 1748–1752* (Berlin, 1756; reprint, Geneva: Slatkine, 1967), 339 and 339, note b.
- 2 Matthew Pilkington, *The Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters* (London, 1798), 367. Pilkington's book was first published in 1770.
- 3 Cochin also chauvinistically accounted for Liotard's fame in England and Germany (his successes in France were conveniently overlooked) as the consequence of the unrefined taste that reigned in those regions. "Peut-être ces manières de la glace, pesantes & sans esprit, trouveroient-elles des approbateurs en Allemagne & en Angleterre, où l'on ne donne un prix considérable des desseins qu'autant qu'ils sont finis comme des ouvrages de Religieuses, qu'à force de travailler on n'y apperçoit plus le grain du papier, & qu'ils sont surchargés d'une infinité de petites

hachures dans les sens possibles. N'a-t-on pas vu en Allemagne les desseins & les pastels de Liotard avoir du succès? Et ne voyons-nous pas en Angleterre admirer des Dessinateurs de cette espèce?"

Charles-Nicolas Cochin, *Lettres à un jeune artiste peintre* (Paris, 1774), 75–6.

- 4 Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Abecedario de Pierre-Jean Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes*, ed. P. de Chennevières and A. de Montaiglon (Paris: J.-B. Dumoulin, 1851–60), 3:206.
- 5 Reynolds went on to describe Liotard's work as "just what ladies do when they paint for their amusement." James Northcote, *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London: Henry Colbourn, 1819), 60–61. Reynolds's comment was apparently made in 1753 while Liotard was in London.
- 6 Francesco Algarotti, *Opere* (Cremona, 1781), 7:28.
- 7 "Craignent donc que l'étude habituelle du goût Chinois, qui paroît être la passion favorite de M. Boucher, n'altère enfin le grace de ses contours. Ils n'auroient plus la même douceur, s'il continuoît à dessiner des figures de ce genre." Charles Léoffrey de Saint-Yves, *Observations sur les Arts, et sur quelques morceaux de Peinture & de Sculpture, exposées au Louvre en 1748* (Leiden [1748]), 28. On Boucher's studies after Chinese prints, see Perrin Stein, "Boucher's Chinoiserie: Some New Sources," *Burlington Magazine* 138 (1996): 598–604.
- 8 Arnold Neuweiler, *La peinture à Genève de 1700 à 1900* (Geneva: A. Jullien, 1945), 16–17; Louis Hautecoeur, "Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789): Portrait de Richard Pococke," *Bericht der Gottfried Keller Stiftung* (1948–9): 35. See also Auguste Boppe, *Les peintres du Bosphore au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: ACR, 1989), 56. Writing in 1956, François Fosca noted similar

transformations in Liotard's style but was unwilling to account for them: "[Liotard] change radicalement de manière. Plus de ces touches qui font vibrer le ton, plus rien de ce métier libre: un dessin serré, précis, des teintes unies, fondues, un rendu infiniment plus rigoureux de la lumière. Que s'est-il passé dans son esprit? ... Il me paraît impossible que le problème puisse être résolu, et il faut se résigner à ne rien savoir des raisons de cette métamorphose." François Fosca, *La vie, les voyages et les oeuvres de Jean-Étienne Liotard, Citoyen de Genève, dit Le Peintre Turc* (Lausanne and Paris: Bibliothèque des arts, 1956), 14.

- 9 A similar relationship is suggested by Ewa Lajer-Burchard, "Jean-Étienne Liotard's Envelopes of Self," in *Cultures of Forgery: Making Nations, Making Selves*, ed. Judith Ryan and Alfred Thomas (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 137.
- 10 Anne de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard, suivi du catalogue de l'oeuvre dessiné* (Geneva: Musée d'art et d'histoire; Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), cat. no. 40.
- 11 Marcel Roethlisberger and Renée Loche with Bodo Hofstetter and Hans Boeckh, *Liotard: catalogue, sources, et correspondance* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 2008), 1:22. See also Renée Loche and Marcel Roethlisberger, *L'opera completa di Liotard* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1978), 6; and Andreas Holleczek, *Jean-Étienne Liotard: Erkenntnisvermögen und künstlerischer Anspruch* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 200 n. 177.
- 12 My use of the concept of cultural dislocation is indebted to Mary D. Sheriff, "The Dislocations of Jean-Étienne Liotard, Called the Turkish Painter," in *Cultural Contact and the Making of European Art*, ed. Mary Sheriff (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming), and Mary Jo Kietzman, "Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters and

Cultural Dislocation," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 38 (1998): 537–51. My thanks to Sheriff for sharing her article with me before its publication.

- 13 Thomas Kaiser, "The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture," *Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 1 (March 2000): 6–34.
- 14 See Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton, N.J., and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).
- 15 See, among others, Fatma Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Lajer-Burchard, "Jean-Étienne Liotard," 127–43; Nebahat Avcioğlu, "A Palace of One's Own: Stanislas I's Kiosks and the Idea of Self-Representation," *Art Bulletin* 85 (2003): 662–84; and Shirine Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2007). See also Eric R. Dursteler's account of Ottoman–Venetian relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
- 16 The source is an autobiography dictated by the artist to his son: Louis Gielly, "La biographie de Jean-Étienne Liotard écrite par son fils," *Genava* 13 (1935): 191–200 (for this passage see 195). On the Ottoman grand tour in the eighteenth century, see Philip Mansel, "The Grand Tour in the Ottoman Empire, 1699–1826," in *Unfolding the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East*, ed. Paul Starkey and Janet Starkey (Reading, UK: Ithaca, 2001), 41–64.
- 17 John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, *A voyage performed by the late Earl of Sandwich round the Mediterranean in the years 1738 and 1739. Written by himself... To which are prefixed, memoirs of the noble author's life*, ed. John Cooke (London, 1799), iii.
- 18 Liotard also etched one of Watteau's works in 1731. See Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 1:239, and 1:154 for drawings and paintings by Watteau in Liotard's collection.
- 19 Gielly, "La biographie," 195. Other members of the party included James Nelthorpe, John Mackye, and a Mr. Fröhlich, governor to Lord Sandwich. All of the travellers, including Ponsonby and Sandwich, were founders of the short-lived Divan club (1744–6) in London. Membership was restricted to those who had traveled to the Levant. A Vizier and Reis Effendi (secretary) presided over each meeting; the "Al-Koran" was the group's minute book, and its official toast was "the Harem," suggesting the club was as much (or more) ludic in purpose as it was scholarly. The archaeologist Richard Pococke who met Liotard in Constantinople was also a founder. Everard Fawkener became a member when he returned to London. See Rachel Finnegan, "The Divan Club, 1744–46," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 9 (2006): 1–86.
- 20 On Vanmour see Eveline Sint Nicolaas et al., *Jean-Baptiste Vanmour: An Eyewitness of the Tulip Era* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 2003), with further bibliography.
- 21 See, for instance, his drawings of picnics and Turkish musicians in concert, in de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. nos. 51, 52. The latter is very likely to depict an event in a European embassy. For a vivid account of social life in the ambit of the European embassies, see Nigel Webb and Caroline Webb, *The Earl and his Butler in Constantinople: Introducing the Diary of Mr. Samuel Medley, Butler, 1733–1736* (Oakham, UK: Legini, 2006). See also

- James Caulfeild Charlemont, *The Travels of Lord Charlemont in Greece & Turkey, 1749*, ed. W. B. Stanford and E. J. Finopoulos (London: Trigraph, 1984), esp. 204–5.
- 22 Michael McCarthy, “The Dullest Man that ever Travelled?: A Re-Assessment of Richard Pococke and of his Portrait by J.-E. Liotard,” *Apollo* 143 (May 1996): 25–9; Marie-Catherine Sahut, “M. Levett et Melle Hélène Glavany en costume turc,” in *Musée du Louvre, Nouvelles acquisitions du département des peintures 1991–1995* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1996), 240–45.
- 23 Lajer-Burcharth, “Jean-Étienne Liotard,” 130, 132. See also Inge E. Boer, “This is Not the Orient: Theory and Postcolonial Practice,” in *The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis*, ed. Mieke Bal and Inge E. Boer (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), 214–15. For Pococke’s vivid account of his experience of wearing Turkish robes and especially of growing a beard, see McCarthy, “The Dullest Man.” On the street Frankish men adopted Muslim dress but wore wigs and tricorne hats to distinguish them from Ottoman subjects. Liotard wore this hybrid costume in Constantinople, as presumably did many of his male Frankish sitters. None of them, however, chose to be immortalized in it. Gielly, “La biographie,” 196. A Frankish merchant is depicted in hybrid Turkish-Frankish dress in *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes nations du Levant* (Paris, 1714–15), plate 61.
- 24 Gielly, “La biographie,” 196. The pastel portrait of a grand vizier is in the National Gallery, London. See also the drawing of a second grand vizier (there were two successive holders of this office during Liotard’s stay in Constantinople) in de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. no. 61, with further discussion of the London pastel. For Liotard’s study of “Sadig Aga,” see de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, 280, no. 55, for Ibrahim, see cat. no. 62, and for other extant drawings of Ottoman officials see cat. nos. 36, 53, and 60.
- 25 Gielly, “La biographie,” 196; Remus Niculescu, “Jean-Étienne Liotard à Jassy, 1742–1743,” *Genava* 30 (1982): 127–66.
- 26 Gielly, “La biographie,” 196.
- 27 Album H. 2143. See Ivan Stchoukine, *La peinture turque d’après les manuscrits illustrés* (Paris: Geuthner, 1966–71), 2:136 and plate XCVI. For Liotard’s drawing see de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. no. 10. It is equally possible, however, that the miniature in Istanbul is by Liotard himself. If so, its presence in the album is further testament to local interest in his work.
- 28 Gül İrepoğlu, *Levni: Painting, Poetry, Colour* (Istanbul: Society of Friends of Topkapı Palace Museum, 1999), 144, 171. Also published as *Levni, Nakis, Siir, Renk* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1999).
- 29 Album H. 2143. Levni’s miniature in this album is illustrated in İrepoğlu, *Levni*, 144; for Buhari’s plates in this album see Deniz Erudman-Çalis, ed., *Tulips, Kaftans and Levni: Imperial Ottoman Costumes and Miniature Albums from Topkapı Palace in Istanbul* (Frankfurt: Museum für Angewandte Kunst; Munich: Hirmer, 2008), 116–19. For further illustrations of Buhari’s miniatures see Banu Mahir, “Abdullah Buhari’nin minyatürlerinde 18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Kadın Modası,” *P: Sanat, kültür, antika* 12 (1998–9), 70–82. See also Nancy Micklewright, “Musicians and Dancing Girls: Images of Women in Ottoman Miniature Painting,” in *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Madeline C. Zilfi (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 153–68.
- 30 Niculescu, “Jean-Étienne Liotard,” 128, 156, n. 26. On libraries and collections of books and illustrated manuscripts owned by members of the Ottoman court, see Tülay Artan, “Problems Relating to the Social History Context of the Acquisition and Possession of Books as Part of Collections of Objets d’Art in the 18th Century,” in *Art turc/Turkish Art: 10th International Congress of Turkish Art, Geneva, 17–23 September 1995* (Geneva: Fondation Max Van Berchem, 1999), 87–92.
- 31 Artan, “Problems,” 90.
- 32 Giambattista Toderini, *De la littérature des Turcs* (Paris, 1789), 3:51–2 n. 2, 54, 58. According to Toderini, Menasi was the son of the painter Refail.
- 33 The Orientalist Antoine Galland made numerous purchases of manuscripts, including illustrated ones, in Constantinople in the 1670s, as did such successors as François Sevin in 1729–30. After the conclusion of the latter mission, French ambassadors were charged with making acquisitions. See Antoine Galland, *Voyage à Constantinople* (1672–3), ed. Charles Schefer (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larosse, 2002); Francis Richard, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans*. Vol. 1, *Ancien fonds* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1989); and Henri Omont, *Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1902). See also Tülay Artan, “Arts and Architecture,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. Vol. 3, *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 433–5.
- 34 David J. Roxburgh, “Heinrich Friedrich von Diez and his Eponymous Albums: Mss. Diez A. Fols. 70–74,” *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 112–36.
- 35 Metin And coined the term “bazaar artists” in 1985. For an account in English,

- see And, "Bazaar Painters," *Istanbul* (Jan. 1993): 75–81. For lists of extant costume books see Nurhan Atasoy, "The Birth of Costume Books and the Fenerci Mehmed Album," in *Osmanlı kıyafetleri: Fenerci Mehmed Albümü*, ed. İlhami Turan (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1986), 15–30; and Hans-Albrecht Koch, ed., *Das Kostümbuch des Lambert de Vos, Kommentarband* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1991), 48–54. See also Tadeusz Majda, "The Râlabm Album of Turkish Costume," in Karin Adahl et al., *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657–1658* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2006), 196–265; Bronwen Wilson, "Foggie diverse di vestire de' Turchi: Turkish Costume Illustration and Cultural Translation," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37 (Winter 2007): 97–139; and Leslie Meral Schick, "Ottoman Costume Books in a Cross-Cultural Context," in *Art turc/Turkish Art*, 625–8. A small painting in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Estampes, Od 1, fol. 1, is suggestive of other works produced by local artists for foreigners. A French inscription identifies it as a representation of a celebration given for the sultan's mother in the presence of Mme de Girardin, the wife of the French ambassador to Constantinople from 1686 to 1689, who also commissioned the work.
- 36 De Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. no. 41 has pointed out the affinity between Liotard's drawing of women playing mangala and the corresponding plate in the *Recueil Ferriol*. The drawing of the servant offering coffee is similarly reminiscent of plate 48 in the same publication. For Liotard's drawing, see de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. no. 44. The resemblance between Vanmour's images and those in Turkish costume books suggest he, too, consulted them. Perrin Stein, "Amédée Van Loo's *Costume turc: The French Sultana*," *Art Bulletin* 78 (1996): 427 n. 52. Liotard may also have encountered Vanmour's work in the collection of Cornelis Calkoen, a patron of the Genevan and Dutch ambassador to the Porte during Liotard's stay in the empire. On Calkoen and his collection, see Sint Nicolaas et al, *Jean-Baptiste Vanmour*.
 - 37 *Figures naturelles de Turquie par Raynal*, BnF, Estampes, Od. 7 (4o); *Costumes turcs de la Cour et de la ville de Constantinople, peints en Turquie, par un artiste turc*, BnF, Estampes, Od. 6 (4o). The former is inscribed with the date 1688 and the latter with the date 1720. Both inscriptions are in European hands. Hans Georg Majer, "Gold, Silber und Farbe: Mussavir Hüseyin, ein Meister der osmanischen Miniaturmalerei des späten 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Studies in Ottoman Social and Economic Life/Studien zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im osmanischen Reich*, ed. Raoul Motika (Heidelberg: Heidelbergger Orientverlag, 1999), 9–42, esp. 26–9. On the use of the *Costumes turcs* by the French artist Carle Van Loo, see Perrin Stein, "Madame de Pompadour and the Harem Imagery at Bellevue," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 123 (Jan. 1994): 30–44.
 - 38 De Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. nos. 35, 25, 27.
 - 39 De Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. no. 66.
 - 40 De Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. no. 59; Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 1:283–5. The attribution of this work to Liotard has been contested in the past; its spatial ambiguities are an argument in favor of his authorship.
 - 41 The "resolutely planar emphasis" of this drawing has been described by Lajer-Burcharth, "Jean-Étienne Liotard," 134.
 - 42 De Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard*, cat. no. 26.
 - 43 Although I am focusing on Ottoman costume plates, Liotard could have encountered similar representations of space and of three-dimensional objects in illustrated literary manuscripts of the period. See, for instance, the plates in a copy of Atayi's *Hamse*, dated 1721 and now in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. See Günsel Renda, "An Illustrated Eighteenth-Century *Hamse* in the Walters Art Gallery," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 39 (1981): 15–32 and fig. 14, for an example of an interior view that resonates with Liotard's representations of walls and corners in his Ottoman drawings.
 - 44 For further discussion of this portrait, see Sheriff, "Dislocations," forthcoming, and Marianne Koos, "La jouissance du détail: Liotards Bartlocke," *Kritische Berichte* 36 (2008): 19–27.
 - 45 Liotard's high prices were a constant in comments about him. Clément described them as extravagant, and Horace Walpole characterized Liotard as "avaricious beyond imagination." Clément, letter XXI, Paris, 30 Nov. 1748, in *Les cinq années*, 118; Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 4 March 1753, in *The Correspondence and Journals of Horace Walpole*, ed. W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937–83), 20:362. Liotard's Parisian financial contracts are discussed in François Marandet, "The Formative Years of Jean-Étienne Liotard," *Burlington Magazine* 145 (2003): 299.
 - 46 The empire thus provided what G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter have posited of Enlightenment exoticism in general: "an equally potent focus for vicarious identity—as well as vicarious entertainment." See G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, "Introduction: Approaching Enlightenment Exoticism," in *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester and New York:

- Manchester University Press, 1990), 12–13.
- 47 These prints are catalogued in E. Humbert, A. Revilliod and J. W. R. Tilanus, *La vie et les œuvres de Jean Étienne Liotard (1702–1789): étude biographique et iconographique* (Amsterdam: C. M. van Gogh, 1897), 196–200.
- 48 On Liotard's beard, see Koos, "Jouissance"; and Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, "Liotard's Bart: Transkulturelle Maskeraden der Männlichkeit," in *Männlichkeit im Blick. Visuelle Inszenierungen in der Kunst der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Mechthild Fend and Marianne Koos (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 161–80.
- 49 To my knowledge, Liotard was the only European visual artist to be the subject of an eighteenth-century porcelain figurine. Such immortalization is a sure measure of his celebrity. See Walter Staehelin, "J. E. Liotard 'Peintre Turc' als Zürcher Porzellanfigur," *Keramik-Freunde der Schweiz Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 46 (April 1959): 26–27; and Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 2:703.
- 50 Andreas Holleck, "Il faut, coûte que coûte, être un peu charlatan": Jean-Étienne Liotard et son public," in *L'art et les normes sociales au XVIII^e siècle*, ed. Thomas W. Gaehtgens et al. (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2001): 276 n. 4; and Fosca, *La vie, les voyages*, 186 n. 29.
- 51 The drawing is in the Fondation Custodia, Institut Néerlandais, Paris. See Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 2:701, repr. If no polite European would have sat cross-legged on the floor in Western Europe, this was not the case when they were in, or at least represented in, the empire. See, for instance, Liotard's drawing of the French consul in Smyrna (Izmir), Gaspard de Péleran, reclining on cushions (discussed in Lajer-Burcharth, "Jean-Étienne Liotard," 132), and Antoine de Favray's portraits of the French ambassador to the Porte from 1754 to 1768, Charles Gravier de Vergennes and his wife. Painted in 1766, the portrait of Vergennes is a rare representation of a diplomat in Turkish costume. He is also seated cross-legged on cushions and his wife is similarly attired and posed. See Boppe, *Les peintres du Bosphore*, 102–3; and Stephen Degiorgio, *Antoine Favray (1706–1798): A French Artist in Rome, Malta and Constantinople* (Valletta: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, 2004), 109.
- 52 John Rodenbeck, "Dressing Native," in *Unfolding the Orient*, 71.
- 53 According to the *Correspondance littéraire*, which discussed the artist in 1747: "Le long séjour qu'il a fait à Constantinople et la commodité qu'il a trouvée dans l'habillement turc le lui ont fait conserver à Paris, aussi bien que leur longue barbe; peut-être a-t-il dessein de s'attirer de la considération par cette singularité autant que par son talent, et cette idée n'est pas si dépourvue de sens pour en imposer à une nation qui s'attache beaucoup à l'extérieur," cited in Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 1:92.
- 54 "Le plus grand de mes plaisirs est de chercher à penser purement, naturellement et sans aucun préjugé ... je cherche à penser comme les animaux qui n'ont ni mauvaises habitudes, ni préjugés." Jean-Étienne Liotard to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Geneva, 2 September 1765, in *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1965–95), 26:283–4.
- 55 "E' questa pittura quasi senz'ombra in un campo chiaro ... tutta lavorata di mezze tinte, e di perdimenti di lume insensibili, e di un ammirabile rilievo. Ella esprime una natura per niun conto manierata; e tutto
- che pittura Europea, piacerebbe sommamente a' Cinesi medesimi nimici giurati come ella sa, dell'ombrare. Quanto all'estrema finezza del lavoro ... ella è un Olbenio in pastello." Francesco Algarotti to Pierre-Jean Mariette, 13 Feb. 1751, in Algarotti, *Opere* 7:28.
- 56 "La nature n'a point de touches": J.-E. Liotard, "Explication des différens jugemens sur la peinture," *Mercure de France* (Nov. 1762): 172–90 (179 for this quote). Christian Michel, *Charles-Nicolas Cochin et l'art des lumières* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1993), 277, was the first to recognize Liotard's authorship of this article.
- 57 Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Traité des principes et des règles de la peinture* (Geneva, 1781; reprint, Geneva: P. Cailler, 1945), especially 81–101.
- 58 Lajer-Burcharth, "Jean-Etienne Liotard," 136–7.
- 59 Kietzman, "Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters," 541–3. See also Srinivas Aravamudan, "Lady Mary in the Hammam," in Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688–1804* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 159–89. For a different, but complementary, interpretation of Liotard's Ottoman drawings see Holleck, *Jean-Étienne Liotard*, 68–90, who argues that they are the product of the artist's subscription to a British empiricist ideal of the traveler as an unbiased witness and documenter, an ideal that Liotard then carried into his post-Ottoman work.
- 60 Sheriff, "Dislocations," forthcoming.
- 61 "J'ai été très scandalisé de trouver le portrait du Chianlit, qui s'y est dit lui-même surnommé le peintre Turc. Encore est-ce le plus mauvais qu'il ait fait; il est plat, plat, plat, trois fois plat et de tout ce qui a jamais existé de plus plat." Abbé Le Blanc to Maurice Quentin de La Tour, Florence, 8 April 1751, reprinted in

- Hélène Monod-Cassidy, *Un voyageur-philosophe au XVIII^e siècle: L'abbé Jean-Bernard Le Blanc* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941), 401.
- 62 Alistair Laing has translated *plat* as dull; see Laing, "Geneva and Paris: Liotard," *Burlington Magazine* 134 (1992): 749.
- 63 "La couleur tiroit presque toujours sur celle du pain d'épice ... ses têtes parurent plates et sans rondeur": Mariette, *Abecedario*, 3:206. The term "ginger-bread" is a curious one. Mariette may simply be referring to oddities he perceived in Liotard's simulation of fleshtones, but the term was also used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance, to describe the face, "ce visage de pain d'épice," of a man variously identified as a Moor and an African. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, quoted and discussed in Bart Moore-Gilbert, "Western Autobiography and Colonial Discourse: The Case of Rousseau's 'Orientalism,'" *Social Identities* 11 (July 2005): 305 and 313 n. 2.
- 64 Although not as prominent as his signature in his Uffizi self-portrait, the placement of Liotard's signature and date in the upper left of Thellusson's portrait has a similar effect; it draws attention to the planarity of the picture surface and in so doing, creates a tension between illusionism and the flat surface on which it appears.
- 65 For a discussion of Liotard's response to Rembrandt see Marianne Koos, "'Malerie ohne Pockenspuren.' Oberfläche im Werk von Jean-Étienne Liotard," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 70 (2007): 545–72.
- 66 "Ce qui donne aux peintures chinoises l'agrément que nous leur trouvons, c'est d'être unies, propres, nettes, quoique faites par des peuples qui n'ont aucune teinture de l'art." Liotard, *Traité*, 112–13. See also Louise Lippincott, "Liotard's China Painting," *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 13 (1985): 128.
- 67 Liotard, *Traité*, 97. Although the term *ignorant* first appeared in his 1781 treatise, Liotard had been publicizing the value of the *ignorant* or untutored viewer in journal articles since the late 1740s. (One wonders if his evocative term was the happy result of a typographical error.) The *ignorant* is invoked as a positive force in Clément's letters on Liotard (which almost certainly were based on Liotard's own comments), and in Liotard's article in the *Mercure de France* in 1762. For this more genteel journal, the word *particulier* was substituted for *ignorant*. See Clément, letter XXI, Paris, 30 Nov. 1748, and letter LXXXIII, London, 1 Sept. 1751, in *Les cinq années*, 119–20 and 130; and L[iotard], "Explication." Liotard's invocation of the *ignorant* draws on earlier theorizations of the truthfulness of the unbiased (because untutored) viewer, notably by Jean-Baptiste Du Bos in his *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719), but also from within the French academy itself. For the deployment of the figure of the *ignorant* in French art criticism of the period, see Bernadette Fort, "Voice of the Public: The Carnivalization of Salon Art in Pre-Revolutionary Pamphlets," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22 (1989): 368–94, esp. 390–93.
- 68 For eighteenth-century accounts of Turkish architecture in relation to Chinese buildings, see Avcioglu, "A Palace of One's Own," 670. For an eighteenth-century example of Chinese architecture described using Turkish terms, see the Jesuit missionary Louis Lecomte's description of a reception room in a Chinese house as a divan. Louis Lecomte, *Un Jésuite à Pékin: Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine, 1687–1692*, ed. Frédérique Touboul-Bouyeure (Paris: Phébus, 1990), 198.
- 69 Avcioglu, "A Palace of One's Own," 670. Marcel Roethlisberger suggests that Liotard may have seen Chinese painting in Constantinople, and that the artist supplied Algarotti with the idea of comparing the *Chocolate Girl* to Chinese art: Marcel Roethlisberger, "La Chocolatière de Jean-Etienne Liotard," *Genava* 50 (2002): 321; and Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 1:324.
- 70 For the identification of the sitter as Liotard's wife see Duncan Bull, "Princess, Countess, Lover or Wife? Liotard's 'Lady on a Sofa,'" *Burlington Magazine* 150 (Sept. 2008): 592–602.
- 71 "Leurs portraits ne sont que de profil ou de trois quarts, n'entendant point la distribution des ombres, pour former un visage en plein ... leur pinceau est délicat, leurs couleurs vives & long-tems éclatantes ... la perspective y seroit moins ignorée s'ils étudioient ceux d'entr'eux qui en ont écrit": Bourguignon d'Anville, "Mémoires où il est question de la peinture des Turcs & des Persans, de la façon dont les Turcs meublent leurs appartemens, & principalement de la richesse des appartemens du Sérail du grand-seigneur," *Mercure de France* (April 1721): 27–8.
- 72 See, for example, the discussion of Liotard's adoption of the conventions of court portraiture for his representations of royal sitters in Roethlisberger and Loche, *Liotard: catalogue, sources*, 1:301.
- 73 Wolfgang Herrmann, *Laugier and Eighteenth-Century French Theory* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1962), 87.
- 74 Pierre de Vigny, "Dissertation sur l'architecture," *Journal oeconomique* (March 1752): 68–107, esp. 79–80, 98–9, 100–101 (on the *parterre*, see 100). On Vigny, see Michel Gallet, "L'architecte Pierre de Vigny, 1690–1772: ses construc-

tions, son esthétique," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 82 (1973): 263–86, and Herrmann, *Laugier*, 64–5, 84–7.

- 75 See, for example, Robert Finlay, "The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History," *Journal of World History* 9, no. 2 (1998): 141–87. Architectural historians, too, have addressed the presence of the foreign in eighteenth-century European architectural debates and designs. See, among others, Avcioğlu, "A Palace of One's Own," Robin Middleton, "Boullée and the Exotic," *AA Files* 19 (Spring 1990): 35–49; and Joseph Rykwert, *The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1980), 54–79.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN PRINCESSES AS COLLECTORS

Chinese and European Porcelains in the Topkapı Palace Museum

Abstract

Ceramic collecting by women has been interpreted as a form of social competition and conspicuous consumption. Collecting differs from conspicuous consumption, which involves purchasing goods or services not because they are needed, but because there is status and prestige in being seen to have them, and even in wasting them. Collecting, in contrast, implies conservation and augmentation, the preservation of history, aesthetic or scholarly interest, love of beauty, a form of play, different varieties of fetishism, the excitement of the hunt, investment, and even support of a particular industry or artist.

None of these motives, however, readily explains the activities of Ottoman collector-princesses in the eighteenth century—which are all the more mysterious because these women remain relatively anonymous as individuals. It is not easy for us to elucidate the reasons (other than conspicuous consumption) for their amassing of porcelain, and of European porcelain in particular. Could the collection and display of ceramics have been a way of actively creating meanings for themselves and others? Do the collecting habits of these princesses shed some light on their personalities and aspirations? By focusing on two among them I will argue that collecting European rather than Chinese porcelain did signify a notable change of attitude on the part of Ottoman royal women during a period of more widespread social and political reform.

IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY Ottoman capital, artists of unprecedented originality and self-expressiveness seem to have enjoyed an increasing degree of freedom from the creative restrictions of court patronage.¹ Conventionally, artists' independence from formal canons of taste has been construed as having "reflected, as well as contributed to, the creation in a few Ottomans of a mental attitude with a 'modernist' tendency, i.e., one open to change and one individualistic in temperament."² At the same time, an exceptional receptiveness to foreign artists in Istanbul, and especially to European painters and architects, has been regarded as having provided new models.³ The political and cultural outlook of this period's patrons of art has also been seen as reflecting modernity and reform.⁴

Cross-Currents of "Modernity" in 18th-Century Istanbul

"Modern" has generally described a state of affairs characterized by innovation, experimentation, and certain kinds of distancing from the past. The word "modern," implying the present or existing state in opposition to the past of a tradition, finds an equivalent in a variety of terms the Ottomans used over the centuries, ranging from Arabic constructs such as *fî-zemânînâ* to *'asr-ı hâzır*, *muassır* and *'asrî*. The Persian

word *nev*, meaning mostly “new,” “fresh,” and “novel,” was virtually synonymous, and was widely used to indicate all things contemporary or characteristic of the present moment in time. While the Arabic words or phrases seem to define “modern” mostly with negative connotations, in Ottoman usage the Persian word was given a positive emphasis by reference to anything “current,” “contemporary,” “up-to-date,” “new-fangled” or “fashionable.” Hence the term *tarz-ı nev* is generally used to signify any “new style” in artistic creation. *Cedid*, an Arabic word which means literally “new,” also refers to a strong and conscious break with tradition. It is not necessarily negative, but neutral, and it may also be positive, at least for some. Likewise, *mücedded* (a derivative of *tecdid*, “a refreshing”), which means “renewed,” seems to be neutral, but the term for the person behind the action, *müceddid*, has slightly more complicated connotations. First, it denotes a renewer or reformer who makes something new (*cedid*). Secondly, it makes reference to a particular Islamic reformer, Ahmed Sirhindî (d. 1624), *müceddid-i elf-i sânî* (Renewer of the second [Islamic] millennium). From the early seventeenth century *nizâm-ı cedid* was used for a new order as opposed to the ancient one, *nizâm-ı kâdim*. In the early eighteenth century, while the term “new order” was promoted by Müteferrikâ İbrahim Efendi, the mastermind behind the first Ottoman printing press in Istanbul, a new era was conventionally defined by *nev-zuhûr* or *nev-icâd*, “goods and deeds.”

Just what these connoted was (and is) a matter of divergent and highly opinionated interpretations.⁵ Towards the end of the century, the title *Nizâm-ı Cedid* was applied to a series of military and political reforms carried out by Selim III (r. 1789–1807) and hence also to a political statement. The term later came to refer to the regular troops established under the reform program. Many other terms were used in this period and later to label the reforms. *Teceddüdâd* means renewal, new life, rebirth, a new start, regeneration, recovery, reawakening, resurgence, revitalization, renaissance, and revival; and while a *teceddüd* is a modernist, a *teceddüdçü* is an Islamic renewer, like *müceddid*. There was, however, no translation for or parallel to the word “modernization,” which came to describe the swift rise in Europe and America of powerful tendencies towards advancement in technology and science, as well as the development of nation-states, democratic political systems, and the expansion of capitalist modes of production. Associated with modernization, of course, are not only the values of humanism and enlightenment, but also those of colonialism and European imperialism. “Westernization,” on the other hand, was widely employed in the form of the word *garplılaşıma*, but only towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The liberals around Selim III have been portrayed as united, and have thereby been counterposed to another unified group of anti-reformists or conservatives behind (or identified with) the May 1807 rebellion.⁶ In reality, however, the com-

position of the period's elite was quite convoluted, and the reformers' multiple identities and therefore shifting political alliances and allegiances are difficult to pinpoint.⁷ Following the enthronement of Selim III, distinctive groups among the Sufi orders, most notably the Mevlevîs and the Nakşibendî-Müceddidîs, came forth as allies of the sultan and pro-reform supporters of the New Order. Nevertheless, differences between the two Sufi groups, if not among their followers, were (and are) quite marked. Among other things, the Mevlevîs seem to have fostered or facilitated artists' independence from the court, and also to have encouraged the efflorescence of novel forms of artistic expression in poetry, painting, and music. This appears to have permitted a more liberated poetics, the mixing and mingling of artists and patrons of various faiths and backgrounds, and experimentation with unconventional subject matter. In contrast, the teachings of the Nakşibendî-Müceddidîs were part and parcel of a growing tendency towards the strengthening of Sunni Islamic orthodoxy in Istanbul. Nakşibendî-Müceddidîs had adopted fundamentalist tenets and turned belief in a reformed, purified Islam into political policy.⁸ There has been no comprehensive study of their ways of artistic self-expression as a whole. Still, some of them did produce a distinctive genre of poetry, which is marked not by counterposing Sirhindî's *vahdet-i şühûd* teachings to Ibn-i Arabî's *vahdet-i vücûd*, but by an eclectic and equidistant openness to both principles.⁹ This was a fresh attitude, and in general they blended with the rest of the Istanbul elite.

The reformers' circumspect if not totally reluctant advocacy of modernity extended to economic restructuring. It involved trade liberalization, espousal of the free market, and opening up to the outside world. However, such changes remained largely haphazard and piecemeal. Often, these conspicuous consumers of foreign goods also turned out to be zealous supporters of fiscalism and provisionism. This was true of liberals as well as fundamentalists. Likewise, although they admired and approved of the European way of life, and imitated it in every possible way in the privacy of their sumptuous palaces—which flaunted luxury imports and even opera stages—their cultural and artistic inclinations elude easy categorization. Some of these daring and libertine artists or connoisseurs, including those who most enjoyed European things, might well have been conservative Muslims. The picture is further complicated by the personal idiosyncrasies of prominent individuals, more frequently encountered than before in this stressful and volatile atmosphere. This was a time when many parties and individuals were caught in two (if not more) distinct and antithetical relationships with modernity, involving both conflict and compromise.

We also have to consider the paradoxical attitude of at least some members of the royal family to modernity and reform. This study is, at least in part, a reflection on the contested identity of the era's Ottoman princesses, the sisters and nieces of



1

Scroll fragment, Akkoyunlu-Tabriz, late 15th century. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153. After Rogers, Çağman and Tanındı, *Topkapı Saray Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts*, 118–19, ill. 79.

The miniature shows blue-and-white porcelains in the process of being transported, perhaps in a wedding procession, as part of the bride's trousseau, or in a commercial convoy traveling around the oases of Turfan.

Selim III. They, too, were caught between self and family, mercantilism and the free market, tradition and modernity. Emerging from their husbands' domain into an ostentatious lifestyle in their new, stylish waterfront palaces, these women appear as patrons who acquired and hoarded European goods with great avidity. One of them, Hadice Sultan the Younger, was ultimately made into a scapegoat because of her role in promoting familiarity with, understanding of, and approval for Western forms and norms. This brought her a negative, disturbing public identity, to the point where she was singled out by conservatives as a surrogate target for critics of the regime.

The Topkapı Collection of European Porcelains

Ottoman royalty, unlike their counterparts in Europe, had continuous access to Chinese porcelains from the mid-fifteenth century onward (Fig. 1).¹⁰ From the ninth century, Chinese porcelain had been transported westward via the Silk Road, and Middle Eastern courts, fascinated with the celadons and blue-and-whites, remained insatiable customers. Official documents show that, from the early sixteenth century, an amazing collection of Chinese blue-and-whites, celadons and enamels, to be complemented in the later seventeenth century by equally spectacular Japanese ware, was being amassed in the Topkapı Palace (Fig. 2).¹¹ Subsequently, when European hard porcelain began to be produced first in Saxony, and then in many other places in the early eighteenth century, Ottoman royalty were among its early customers. Today, the Topkapı Palace Museum holds well over 10,000 pieces of Chinese (the third biggest collection in the world) and Japanese porcelain, as well as about 5,000 European pieces.¹²

Holdings acquired by two princesses in particular, Hadice Sultan the Elder (1658–1743), and her grand-niece Hadice Sultan the Younger (1768–1822), seem to have formed the basis for the riches in the imperial vaults. In addition to a large



2
Blue-and-white porcelain ewer, China, early 15th century. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 14/1410. After *İstanbul'daki Çin Hazinesi* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2001), 95.

number of Chinese porcelains that she was given as part of her trousseau in 1675, the elder Hadice continued to collect on her own, and when she died in 1743 her collection comprised no fewer than 2,365 Chinese and twelve European pieces.¹³ All were immediately sent to the Topkapı Palace. The younger Hadice, in contrast, developed a personal taste for porcelain from Saxony, Vienna, and France. When she died in 1822, hundreds of precisely identified pieces and sets of European porcelain were transferred to the Palace Treasury. Only four Chinese porcelain jars were amongst her collection.¹⁴

As indicated by the foregoing, porcelains often entered the palace cellars by way of the estates of the deceased, and were then sometimes (re)circulated as gifts among members of the royal family or leading dignitaries. According to a sample of the registers in which royal and other elite estates were recorded, the number of Chinese porcelain pieces entering the Topkapı Palace collections in the eighteenth century was 16,566—compared with 400 in the sixteenth, 3,645 in the seventeenth, and only five in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ In the meantime, the numbers of European porcelains coming to the palace were also substantial.¹⁶

Clearly, something quite striking was going on in the eighteenth century—but just what was it? Let me note, first, that most of the Chinese pieces incorporated into the Topkapı Palace collections in the eighteenth century were not current but came from earlier periods of acquisition. In contrast, European porcelains were being purchased on a massive scale for the first time. Second, at a time when European porcelain manufacture was coming into its own, the Ottomans tried to introduce pottery production in Istanbul. This was initiated in 1719 by the ambitious and innovative grand vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa (in office 1718–30), and appears to have targeted a revival of İznik ware. But İbrahim Paşa was not only trying to shore up the Porte's crisis-ridden finances. He was also keeping an eye on all contemporary European advances. His broader vision may have extended to promoting an Ottoman speculative market in tulips,¹⁷ based on what he had learned from the South Sea Bubble, as well as relocating some old industries and creating new ones in imitation of European courts' patronage.

Although it eventually failed in the 1730s,¹⁸ İbrahim's attempt at establishing pottery production in Istanbul coincided with signs of a change in Ottoman taste over the first half of the eighteenth century. It is through this change of taste—from Oriental celadons, blue-and-whites, or polychrome porcelains from the fifteenth century onwards, to European porcelains (most notably Meissen, Vienna, Vincennes, Limoges, Paris, and Sèvres), which became available in the Ottoman luxury market as early as the 1730s—that I propose to address the craze for porcelain among the Ottoman princesses. In the process, I will also touch upon notions of collecting and assembling, as opposed to conspicuous consumption, in the Ottoman context.

1. Saksonyakâri: Meissen or Saxony Experiments in imitating Chinese porcelain, known as “white gold,” had begun in Europe under Francesco de’ Medici in the sixteenth century. After Louis XIV had been forced to order the French court silver to be melted down in order to finance the Wars of the Spanish Succession, a new wave of experimentation was launched in an effort to replace all the silverware that had perished in the process. But success in this regard fell to another patron of the arts, Prince Friedrich Augustus I, Elector of Saxony (1694–1733), who also became King Augustus II of Poland (1697–1704 and 1709–33).¹⁹ Friedrich established the Saxon capital of Dresden as a major cultural center and amassed an impressive art collection. In 1709, hard-paste porcelain production began in the city. The following year production was transferred to nearby Meissen—to a plant called the Königlliche (and later, Staatliche) Porzellan Manufaktur Meissen. Around the same time, manufactories in Höchst, Berlin, Frankthal, and Nymphenburg also began producing porcelain.

The earliest Meissen ware had quite a limited colour range. A new type, in which bright colours were mixed with the earlier earth colours, was introduced after the 1720s. Vases and pitchers, and dinner, coffee, or tea sets produced in this period reflected East Asian tastes and artistry, for patrons at the time mostly desired underglaze-blue pieces with chinoiserie decoration. Some of the first Meissen porcelains also copied the Kaikemon ware of late-seventeenth-century Japan, which did not make use of underglaze blue in the best-quality products.²⁰ The synthesis of the porcelain body, the glazing, the composition of the underglaze blue, and the implementation of the firing process remained an unpredictable procedure in which four hard-to-control factors had to be coordinated. Hence, only in the early 1730s did it become possible to call the Meissen dishes “beautiful and agreeable.”²¹ By 1732–4, Ottoman merchants had already begun to place huge orders for coffee-cups. In 1732, one Manasses Athanas commissioned 2,000 dozen coffee-cups (without handles and saucers) from the Meissen factory (i.e., 24,000 pieces). This was the first commission that the Meissen manufactory had received from Ottoman dealers, and it agreed to produce 43,200 pieces annually in the future. Two years later, a new order was placed, perhaps by the same merchant, for a total of 36,000 cups.²² Significantly, some fine examples of such early Meissen ware are to be found in the Topkapı Palace collections, including coffee-cups without handles.²³ Several such cups, albeit mostly from the last quarter of the century, have also survived in the Dresden collections (Fig. 3).²⁴ More coffee-cups from this period in the Chinese Imari style, with red, purple, and green tones added, are also to be found in private collections in Turkey today.²⁵

Perhaps the most sensational pieces in the Topkapı collection are two bowls painted by two celebrated Meissen artists. One of these bowls, decorated with Chi-



3

3
Coffee-cup, inscribed *hâşa-Allah, içene âfiyet olsun* (God forbid! May it do you [drinker] good!), Meissen, dated 1756–7. *Porzellansammlungen*, Dresden, 1975. After Loesch, “Zum Einfluß der Türkenmode auf das Meißner Porzellan,” 333 (cat. no. 433).

nese medallions in which a port city, ships, and European men and women are shown, is a fine example of a very popular painting style—that of Johann Gregorius Herold/Hörold (1696–1775); the other blue-ground chinoiserie bowl is by David Köhler (d. 1723).²⁶ The former bears the “whip” modification of the Meissen brandmark, indicating that it was specifically made for Ottoman customers.²⁷

While the desire for replicas of East Asian ware was initially overwhelming, the Meissen artists soon developed their own inimitable style—a style that reflected the ornateness of baroque drama. After 1737, rococo patterns were preferred. Topographical scenes and floral motifs adapted from contemporary botanical studies, as well as, occasionally, figure studies drawn from *commedia dell'arte*, were employed for decorative purposes. There are a few such bowls datable to 1730–40 in the Topkapı Palace collections,²⁸ while a delightful polychrome ewer and washbasin set made for the Ottoman market in the 1740s or 1750s survives in the collection of the manufactory in Dresden. It is decorated with roses, carnations, and tulips, some in relief (Fig. 4).²⁹ The same form (but with different decorative programs) was later to be used in the Vienna manufactory, too.

Also from this period are figurines based on depictions of Ottoman men and women in early eighteenth-century engravings. These were once quite fashionable Meissen products although today only a few can be found at the Topkapı Palace, their main market being non-Ottoman. Among prints in the Meissen archives (acquired for the use of painters for their designs) are four hand-coloured sheets of Ottoman figures based on well-known sources—such as the engravings of the Flemish artist Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671–1737), who worked in the retinue of European ambassadors in Istanbul from 1699 until his death.³⁰ Thus a sultan’s guard (*solakbaşı*) and a bandit (*heyduk*) after Vanmour were painted on a teapot of ca. 1723–6, attributed to Herold.³¹ Like many figurines dated to the 1750s or after,³² these oriental figures stand in striking contrast to the classical motifs, inspired by the archaeological excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, which were reworked in the neoclassical style that came to be preferred at Meissen.

After Count Camilio Marcolini took over at the Meissen factory in 1774, special workshops catering to the Ottoman demand were set up, and new models and a distinctive repertoire were established. The factory instituted several studios in the



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4
Polychrome ewer-and-washbasin set, Meissen, 1740s–50s.
Porzellansammlungen, Dresden, PE. 3619a-c. After Loesch, “Zum Einfluß der Türkenmode auf das Meißner Porzellan,” 344 (cat. no. 456).

The water poured from the ewer drains through a strainer in the middle of the basin. When not in use, the ewer sits in the center of the basin. A bar of soap could also be placed there.

vicinity of Meissen as well as at Regensburg for the sole purpose of such decorative work, and kept Ottoman enthusiasts satisfied as far as politics allowed.³³ Heavily gilded covered dishes, decorated with bouquets of flowers set within enveloping foliage, are a type of Meissen ware that avoided figural representation. A fish-scale surface pattern was also used together with floral decorations. The knobs on the lids were always in the form of citrus fruits, and lemons in particular.

Istanbul was now in want of cups with handles as part of coffee or tea services. In the Topkapı Palace collections, there is a tea set for three people from the Marcolini Period (1774–1805), consisting of an oval tray, three cups with handles, their saucers and spoons, a milk pot with lid, a coffee pot with lid, a sugar bowl with lid, two confectionary bowls with lids, a tea pot, a rosewater flask, and an incense burner (Fig. 5).³⁴ From the same period there is also a complete coffee set for one, comprising a cup and its saucer, a milk pot and a coffee pot (both with lids), and a lidded sugar bowl, all set on an oval tray (Fig. 6).³⁵ A late eighteenth-century small oval box in the Kaikemon style with a dog figurine on the lid is another, surprising find in the Palace collections (Fig. 7).³⁶ This box, too, bears the “whip” brandmark. These pieces are complemented by more lidded boxes, bowls, and dishes in Turkish private collections. One of the porcelain designs the Ottomans favoured in the Marcolini Period features a red (or green or yellow) spiral alternating with a floral band on a white ground. A lidded dish with this pattern in the Sadberk Hanım Museum, Istanbul, bearing a lemon-shaped knob (Fig. 8),³⁷ matches another lidded dish (or box) in Dresden.³⁸ Yet another lidded dish in the same Istanbul collection, covered with pink rosebuds, gilded leaves and green triple dots, also has an ornamental lemon-shaped knob (Fig. 9).³⁹ Among the figurines of the period in the Topkapı Palace collection are some by artists such as Johann Friedrich Eberlein (1695–1749), Peter Reinicke (1711–68), and Johann Peter Melchior (1742–1825, *Modellmeister* at Höchst).⁴⁰

2. Beç İşi or Beçkârî: Vienna The Vienna manufactory, founded in 1718 by a Dutchman by the name of Claudius Innocentius Du Paquier and employing masters of the craft attracted there from Meissen, quickly grew into a fashionable center. Subsequently, a connection between Ottoman markets and Austrian porcelain

manufacturers was secured through the Ostender Kompanie (Eastern Trade Company) in Vienna. A few examples of early Vienna ware, especially made to suit Ottoman taste, survive in the Topkapı Palace collections—although we do not know just when and how they arrived. A table decoration and two ewer-and-dish sets are dated to the 1730s and therefore strikingly early (Fig. 10).⁴¹ More Vienna ware from the first half of the eighteenth century has been located in private collections in Istanbul.

In 1744 Empress Maria Theresa of Austria acquired Du Paquier's struggling manufactory and turned it into the Kaiserliche Fabrik. Under her patronage the business acquired greater stability. Eventually, there would be twenty more factories or decorating studios in Vienna. Designs were developed independent of Meissen production and the quality of painting was very fine. Several artists, most notably Georg Stöckel, Josef Schindele and Andreas Hagel, have been identified as having produced the decorations of cups exported to the Ottoman capital between 1762 and 1784.⁴² The third period of Viennese porcelain production is known as the Sorgenthal Period (1784–1805), after a director of the factory, Conrad Sörgal von Sorgenthal. Many examples of Vienna ware in Istanbul collections are from this period. Amongst numerous lidded bowls, decorated with floral cartouches and lemon-shaped ornamental knobs, a particularly charming example is a pair of lidded jars with flowers in relief (Fig. 11).⁴³ The fish-scale pattern used together with floral decorations and citrus-fruit knobs on the lids was also adapted to Vienna ware (Figs. 12 and 13).⁴⁴

This porcelain trade was heavily affected by the Russo-Ottoman war of 1787–92. As Austria backed Russia, Ottoman imports from Vienna declined by as much as one-fifth, and customers were (re)directed to Meissen. Count Marcolini, the director of the Meissen factory, capitalized on this, taking a special interest in the Ottoman market (as well as the Russian market) in an attempt to reverse his factory's declining financial fortunes. Sorgenthal also looked for a way round such obstacles. Hence the gifts made to Ottoman royalty and other dignitaries by the Vienna factory (Fig. 14).⁴⁵ A discount on production targeted for the Ottoman market was instrumental in putting trade back on track, and until the mid-nineteenth century the Ottomans kept buying from both Meissen and Vienna. However, Vienna's quality gradually deteriorated, and following the death of Sorgenthal in 1805, its exports to the Ottoman capital became more and more poorly designed, gilded and decorated.⁴⁶

3. Fransızkârî: Parisian or French At the beginning of the eighteenth century, after a long period of experiment, the French, too, finally succeeded in making soft porcelain, and in 1738 production began at an old chateau in Vincennes near Paris. Initially imitating Japanese ware, then producing Meissen-like porce-

lain, the factory did not offer anything for sale until 1754. Designated as the royal factory (*Manufacture Royale de Porcelaines de France*), Vincennes came to obtain monopoly privileges, so that polychrome porcelain production was banned for all other parties.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the precariousness of the financial situation finally led to the king becoming the sole owner of the factory in 1759, at the behest of Madame de Pompadour, and his monopoly and profits were secured by a succession of laws excluding others from certain kinds of porcelain manufacture over the next thirty years. As the king's exclusive rights covered particular techniques, including gilded porcelain, coloured flowers, and sculpture, Vincennes ware came to be identified with a number of trademark colours. These included a distinctive dark blue (also called Mazarin Blue, discovered in 1749), a turquoise blue (1752), a powder blue that imitated Chinese ware (1753), yellow (1753), and apple/pea green (1756), as well as motifs comprising medallions of pink ground framed with gilt decoration in relief, known as Pompadour Rose (1757–64). Every year the king arranged for a sale at Versailles, where his courtiers and Parisians purchased and collected large quantities of porcelain, including table services, tea sets, and decorative items such as sets of vases and matching candelabra.⁴⁸ In 1756 production was relocated to Sèvres—near Madame de Pompadour's mansion at Bellevue, between Paris and Versailles. At that time the dark, underglaze blue was abandoned as a result of the discovery of a brighter overglaze blue. While the latter became the most favored hue at Sèvres and came to be called Royal Blue (1760), reddish brown and black were also much used in the 1770s. As for the decorative program, ribbons (1757), partridge eyes (1760), fish-scales, and crocodile-skin patterns (1762), pebbles (1768), curves, and pendants (1780) became the preferred motifs on a background of porphyry and marble patterns (1793).⁴⁹ What would come to be known as Sèvres porcelain characterized the French court taste of the period. Ottoman exposure to French porcelain was minimal until the 1770s.

The Seven Years War (1756–63) pushed Sèvres porcelain to the foreground while Meissen production declined. Also around this time, porcelain production in France spread to new localities. In 1769, the raw materials for producing hard porcelain were located in Saint-Yrieix in the Limousin region, and the ensuing new production line was called Limoges after the locality that supplied them. In 1771 a new factory for producing hard porcelain was established at Limoges itself, and the next year experimentation with hard porcelain production also succeeded at Sèvres. In 1784 Louis XVI annexed Limoges to Sèvres, but this arrangement failed and Limoges production came to an end in 1796. Over the period 1770–1870, some thirty factories and four or five workshops, all located to the northeast of Paris, and employing nearly 4,000 artists and craftsmen, kept producing porcelain known as “*Porcelaine de Paris*.”⁵⁰ In the Parisian ateliers, porcelains intended for the Ottoman



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6

5
Tea set, Meissen, Marcolini Period (1774–1805). Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 26/4559, 26/4560, 26/4561, 26/4562, 26/4563, 26/4564, 26/4565, 26/4566, 26/4567, 26/4568, 26/4594, 26/4596, 26/4598. After *Osmanlı Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri*, 34–5.

6
Coffee set, Meissen, Marcolini Period (1774–1805). Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 26/4621, 26/4622, 26/4623, 26/4624, 26/4625. After *Osmanlı Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri*, 38.

market included wide-lipped *aşure* and *salep* pitchers, deep dishes, table clocks, and vases decorated by Orientalist painters. In the wake of the French Revolution, soft porcelain production was totally abandoned at Sèvres in the early 1800s, and all such stocks were sold off. During this process, undecorated pieces from the warehouse were appropriated by outside decorators; painted in the old way, these “imitations” were sold to some European courts and today can be located in certain private as well as museum collections, including the Topkapı Palace.⁵¹ Porcelains produced in Vincennes–Sèvres were known in the Ottoman capital as *Fransızkârî Saksonya*, and Limoges or Paris ware as *Fransızkârî* or *Pariskârî*. An 1816 vase from the Restoration Period (1814–24) is the earliest Sèvres piece in the Topkapı collection.⁵²

The wars of the second half of the eighteenth century not only interrupted the European porcelain trade. They also spelled ruin for Ottoman finances. As a final blow to the economy, trade with France, the Ottomans’ main commercial partner, collapsed as the latter struggled with the 1789 revolution, and importing Vincennes, Limoges, Sèvres, or Paris ware became ever more difficult for porcelain enthusiasts in Istanbul.⁵³ The Ottoman ambassador to France between 1797 and 1802, Morali Esseyid Ali Efendi, did not go beyond noting that there were numerous porcelain manufacturers (*fağfûr kârhâneleri*) in Paris.⁵⁴ His successor Mehmed Said Halet Efendi, however, was preoccupied with porcelain purchases during his four years



7

7
Box in the Kaikemon style, Meissen,
Marcolini Period (1774–1805).
Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul.
After Sonat, “European Porcelains,”
429.

in Paris (1802–6). The ambassador complained repeatedly about the recurring requests for porcelain that he received from *grandees* and friends in Istanbul.⁵⁵

Ottoman Royal Women’s New Way of Life

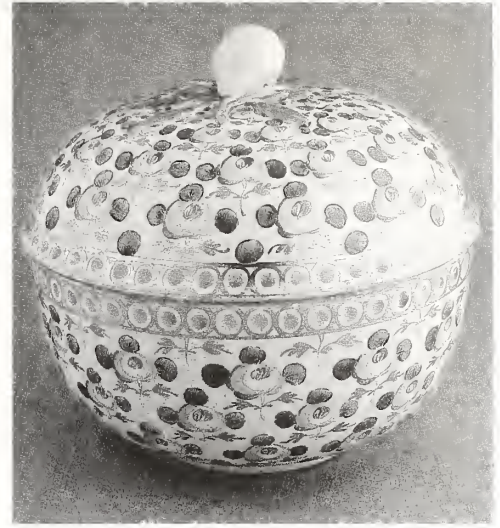
Although the ways in which Ottoman royalty engaged with the luxury markets of the eighteenth century are still unclear, about the phenomenon itself there can hardly be any question.⁵⁶ Hard porcelain produced early in the eighteenth century in Meissen, Vienna, and Paris, as well as in numerous other European centers, appears to have seduced the increasingly free-spirited Ottoman princesses of the time, for “porcelain was the art most truly and spontaneously expressive of the spirit of the eighteenth century, with its craving for novelty and its love of luxury.”⁵⁷ These Ottoman princesses were becoming more and more independent not just of “traditions” but also of their husbands, and this was reflected in the way in which their own waterfront palaces came to dwarf those of their spouses along the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn.⁵⁸ Earlier, under the absolute rule of the sultans, it had been the splendour of the (one and only) imperial palace that was symbolically most important in publicly displaying and celebrating their dynastic power, and thus legitimating their governance. But soon after the court returned from its prolonged stay in Edirne in 1703, it became a major prerogative of the sultans’ nieces and daughters to build their palaces on the waterfront, along the shores of the capital. Princesses were delegated to put on view the presence and power of the dynasty, in a project to reinscribe the House of Osman into the urban space of the imperial city. Furthermore, through the staging of frequent royal marriages, public displays of bridal gifts and trousseaus in successive processions became commonplace in the life of Istanbulites, which in turn triggered a general interest in amassing luxury objects.

As Ottoman princesses thereby emerged as ambitious patrons of palatial architecture, they had to find new ways to fill and decorate their palaces. At a time when the Ottoman authorities’ attempts to revive Iznik pottery in Istanbul were coming to a decisive end, these royal ladies were swiftly adapting their tastes to the gilt and shine, the “beautiful and agreeable” colors and decorations of European porcelain. This was even before European-style cabinets, wardrobes, tables, and armchairs



8

8
Lidded dish, Meissen, Marcolini
Period (1774–1805). Sadberk Hanım
Museum, Istanbul, HK 198-3261
A-B. After *Sadberk Hanım Museum*,
145.



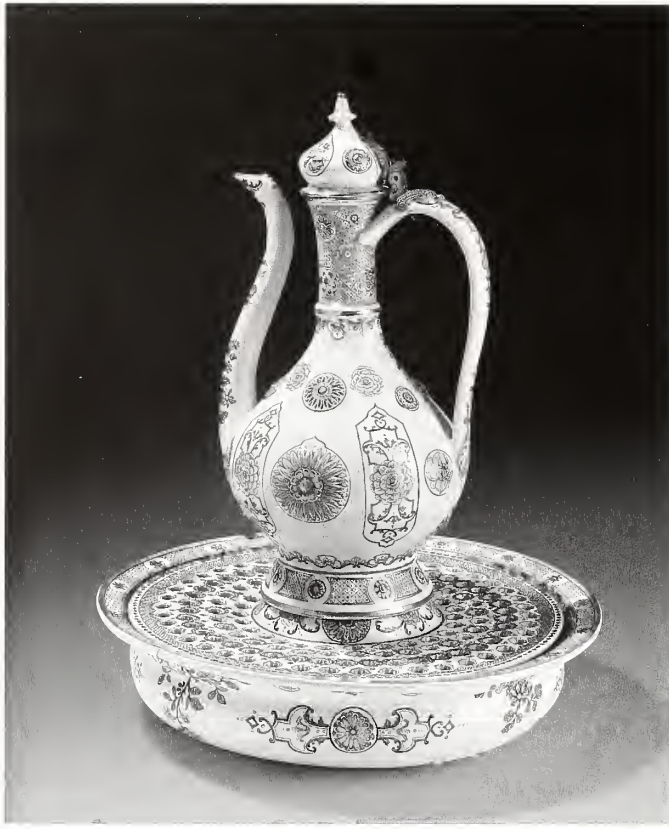
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9
Lidded dish, Meissen, Marcolini
Period (1774–1805). Sadberk Hanım
Museum, Istanbul, HK 194-3257
A-B. After *Sadberk Hanım Museum*,
144.

came to crowd their halls. Moreover, in this period their interest in Chinese or Japanese porcelain was minuscule—next to nothing. Possibly this demonstrates that they were disassociating themselves from things past, as well as from other new elites in Istanbul. For the latter, as for commoners, Oriental porcelain, which was becoming more and more readily available on the market, remained most desirable.⁵⁹

Caught between the tides was Hadice Sultan the Elder. In contrast to her sisters and many of her nieces (namely the daughters of Mustafa II and Ahmed III), Hadice the Elder appears to have been a dedicated collector of Oriental ware. Studies of the Topkapı Palace collections of Chinese porcelains and celadons point to a big jump in numbers between 1725 and 1750 (as compared with 1675–1725 or 1750–75).⁶⁰ It has been suggested that the totals for this twenty-five year period and the decade following it were swollen by the incorporation of two massive collections. One of these belonged to Hadice Sultan the Elder, who died in 1743, whereupon (as already mentioned) her probate inventory turned out to comprise no fewer than sixty-two celadons, 2,303 Chinese porcelains, and twelve European porcelains, adding up to a total of 2,377 pieces.⁶¹ When she married in 1675, she had only 311 porcelains and celadons (268 plain and forty-three bejewelled) in her trousseau.⁶² Her kitchen accounts, too, record massive displays of “table” pomp and circumstance.⁶³ Indeed, Hadice Sultan is known to have repeatedly fêted her brothers, Mustafa II and Ahmed III, in her palaces. On the eve of the events that led to the disastrous revolt of 1730, she was holding a banquet for the sultan and the grand vizier, as well as a crowd of high-ranking dignitaries, at her Üsküdar palace on the Bosphorus.⁶⁴ She has, in fact, been blamed for preventing the grand vizier from moving on to Istanbul that night in order to take immediate action against the rebels.⁶⁵ Was she secretly a member of the opposition party, or was this an error of judgment on her part? In any case, it led to her brother Ahmed III’s dethronement.

When Hadice the Elder died in 1743 she was in her nineties. She could not possibly have been as ambitious and motivated a collector as she had once been. Nevertheless, she had managed to acquire a dozen pieces of European porcelain during the first ten years of their appearance in Ottoman lands. As a true collector, she must have retained the drive to hunt for the most recent diplomatic gifts presented to the new sultan, her nephew Mahmud I (r. 1730–54).



10

10

Ewer-and-basin set, Vienna, ca. 1735.
Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul,
26/4939, 26/4938. After *Osmanlı
Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri*, 46-7.

In Europe, meanwhile, a number of contemporary royal women were involved in the growth of porcelain manufacture not only as consumers and collectors who made large purchases, but also (as in the case of Madame de Pompadour mentioned above) as motivated patrons of arts and industry.⁶⁶ Their impact ranged from initiating the establishment of manufactories to supporting innovation and production. They included Empress Maria Theresa of Austria (r. 1745–65) and Maria Amalia Cristina, the Queen Consort of Spain and Naples (r. 1738–60),⁶⁷ who set up a manufactory in the palace grounds of Capodimonte near Naples. Although it was active for only sixteen years, some of the finest figure models in soft-paste porcelain were produced there. The “Porcelain Room” made for the queen at the royal villa at Portici between 1757 and 1759 is one of the great feats of craftwork in this medium. Of two Russian empresses, Elisabeth (r. 1741–62), daughter of Peter the Great, supported the first manufactory at St Petersburg by employing artists from Meissen; and Catherine II the Great (r. 1762–96)⁶⁸ gave considerable state subsidies to the “Imperial Factory,” in recognition for which her portraits decorated many of its products. Queen Juliane Marie of Denmark (r. 1752–66)⁶⁹ was the principal shareholder and supporter of the Royal Danish Porcelain Manufactory founded in 1775. In 1762, Queen Charlotte of England (r. 1761–1818) was presented with a porcelain breakfast and candle set by Josiah Wedgwood, after ten years in preparation. “In 1765 she ordered ‘a complete set of tea things’, a coffee service for twelve including candle sticks and fruit baskets which were decorated with modelled flowers in green and gold.”⁷⁰ Royal ladies’ influence was also felt indirectly. One of the most splendid pieces of Meissen chinoiserie painted by the eminent artist Herold in the 1730s is a cup bearing the monogram of Queen Sophia Dorothea of Prussia—

presumably commissioned by the Elector of Saxony to be presented during his formal visit to her court. The recipient herself is represented in the scenes on the cup.⁷¹ As European porcelain became popular by the mid-eighteenth century and “china fever” reached its climax, methods of display also developed in European mansions and palaces—to the point of initiating new architectural schemes.

A Shift in Taste and Behavior: From One Hadice to Another

Hadice Sultan the Younger was another late eighteenth-century princess who, together with her half-sisters Şah (1761–1802) and Beyhan (1765–1825), as well as her nieces Esma the Younger (1778–1848) and Hibetullah (1789–1841), was extremely enthusiastic about novelty in architecture and interior design. They all invested huge sums in the construction and furnishing of their palaces, and ultimately died bankrupt. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, although each princess led her own separate life, their numerous waterfront palaces along the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus were of equal grandeur and similar taste, and taken together diverged largely from other, more conventional forms. We can speculate that, as well as personal wealth, their architectural commissions were intended to demonstrate an appreciation for technological and aesthetical advancements, including the fashionably “modern” European styles of the era such as Neoclassicism or the French Empire style.

It is understood that Hadice the Younger took a personal interest in all details of palatial decoration—quite like Madame de Pompadour, who is known to have supervised the colours of her walls, the paintings on her ceilings, her tapestries, mirrors, furniture, draperies and ornaments, and even the design of her cutlery; she is also said to have had the gift of inspiring artists to work at their best for her and to respond to her tastes.⁷² Hadice, for her part, had the architect-cum-designer Antoine-Ignace Melling (1763–1831) working for her in the 1790s.⁷³ Melling, born in Karlsruhe to a family of artists from Lorraine, lived in Istanbul for eighteen years between 1784 and 1802.⁷⁴ The multi-talented artist caught the attention of the princess while working for Friedrich Hübsch, the Danish *chargé d'affaires*.⁷⁵

Hadice was married in 1786 and, in accordance with royal custom, was allocated an imperial palace in 1791.⁷⁶ The reconstruction of her Neşedâbâd Palace at Deft-erdarburnu (on the European shores of the Bosphorus) took three years, and was completed in 1794. Unfortunately, the building surveys and inspection inventories which usually accompanied such grand projects have not survived in this particular case. This is curious, because there are extensive accounts of earlier phases of construction and restoration at Neşedâbâd. Moreover, all her household accounts are missing, as a result of which we have no direct evidence for her purchases, gifts, or allocations throughout her entire married life. Hadice's private affairs are known

to us only through circumstantial evidence, deriving from Melling's contribution to the Neşedâbâd project.⁷⁷ The surviving collection of letters (in some thirty folios) exchanged between the patron and her architect is unique in the Ottoman context, and quite revealing in many respects.⁷⁸

The letters testify not only to Hadice's insatiable interest in the decoration of her palace(s), but also to her drive and desire to be in command at all times.⁷⁹ A few letters concerning some chairs, perhaps (imitations of) French imports in the Louis XV or Louis XVI style, are a case in point. At the time chairs and armchairs were a novelty in Ottoman interiors. When those initially delivered by Melling did not suit her taste, she made it clear that she wanted gilded ones. On another occasion, only an hour after writing a letter to Melling at six o'clock in the morning to inquire about the delivery of some other chair(s), she wrote yet another letter to repeat that she wanted it (them) as soon as possible.⁸⁰ It must have been her taste, and her genuine support for novelty, liberalism, and reform, that made her impatient about decorating her new waterfront palace in French Empire style—which was a political statement on its own. Ottoman reformers had started turning to France in marked fashion from the 1770s onward, and this trend had peaked under Selim III, so that in the 1790s Istanbul was host to an unprecedented number of French engineers, architects, and military officers.

Melling was employed not only to design the gardens and parts of Hadice's palace. On her repeated orders, he appears also to have designed her dresses, belts, and shawls; and to have created decorative installations for her palace grounds during religious *bayrams*. He designed a knife and a comb embellished with jewels to be presented by the princess to an unidentified gentleman. At the same time, he was instrumental in procuring pearls and precious stones, textiles and laces, trimmings, and mosquito nets, as well as in overseeing the production of small spreads (to be placed under table-trays), comb cases, *kavuk* covers, and napkins. He was an intermediary between the princess and "European" merchants, for example, obtaining at the princess's request six of "those" clocks, and four *arşun* [68 centimeters] of "this" kind of (imported) broadcloth. He also purchased silver chests-of-drawers, chairs, gilded armchairs (see above), and chandeliers on her behalf, as well as a marble (perhaps alabaster or agate) flower pot which could also be used as a lantern. It is interesting that there is no mention of him, not even as an architect, in any other Ottoman source, given that he had also undertaken the rebuilding of various sections of the imperial summer residence at Beşiktaş. Even more frustratingly, there is no mention of European porcelain among the purchases he was ordered to make for Hadice Sultan. After all, Friedrich Hübsch, with whom Melling had been previously affiliated, was a merchant and banker running the Galata-based trading firm of Hübsch and Timoni.⁸¹



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Lidded jar, Vienna, second half of the 18th century. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 16/769. After *Osmanlı Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri*, 50-51.

For visual evidence of this new aestheticized life, we may turn to European engravings or oil paintings—including Melling's own arresting panoramas and interiors in his *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives de Bosphore* (1819). But neither in his textual nor in his visual accounts is there any indication whatsoever of a preoccupation with displaying the imports or collectibles that he himself had procured for the princess. Thus, in the end, it is Ottoman royal ladies' probate registers, especially from the last quarter of the eighteenth into the early nineteenth century, that best reflect their overwhelming interest in collecting European porcelains.

Like her peers, Hadice the Younger died in debt.⁸² Immediately after she passed away on July 17, 1822, her belongings were confiscated and sold at auction.⁸³ Her probate inventories included more than five hundred pieces of European porcelain, which appear to have been kept in three different parts of her palace. (We have no clue whatsoever as to how many pieces of porcelain she might have acquired as bridal gifts, though her trousseau in 1786 is likely to have included earlier pieces returned to the Treasury from the estates of deceased royal women and dignitaries.) When every single item had been counted, thirty-nine plates, eight tureens, one dish, twenty-seven bowls, three coffee-cups, thirteen jugs, three inkpots, one salt-cellar, sixteen trays, one water-pipe, and one broken ewer-and-basin set were identified as Meissen porcelain. One hundred and forty-eight plates, eight tureens, ten dishes, fourteen bowls, twenty-eight jars, and one teapot were listed as Viennese. Finally, thirty-four plates, two bowls, seven jugs, one teapot, six coffee-cups with handles, three saucers, and two ewers were all recorded as French porcelain. None were described as extraordinary, novel, unique, exotic, rare, new, or old, but all were carefully and quite confidently identified by scribes, possibly trained and educated to read the trademarks, as *Saksonya*, *Beçkârî*, *Fransızkârî*, or *Pariskârî*. Even Meissen imitations of Vincennes-Sèvres workshop products were distinguished as *Fransızkârî Saksonya*. Her crystal wares, too, were identified as *Saksonya* or *İngilizkârî*, that is to say Bohemian or English.

The Enigma of Hadice the Younger: Consumer or Collector?

At this point there arises a key question: What was the main motive for such massive accumulations of European porcelain? That they represented a new taste seems beyond doubt. But was this new taste intended to be displayed relatively publicly or privately? Did Hadice acquire all these complete table sets and individual items in order to satisfy herself, and perhaps also to show them off at small, intimate gatherings? Or were they actually intended for use at grander affairs attended by male company from beyond the family—as at state banquets? And if this were the case, could it be that Hadice the Younger was thereby adopting a subtle political stance?

Let us first review the evidence for the second scenario. The discovery of new tastes and the adopting of new manners—all reflected in a proliferation of table sets, dessert sets, tea sets and coffee sets—were part and parcel of a new kind of life to which this princess in particular, and probably others, aspired. The emphasis on sets might be taken as pointing towards actual use, by large numbers of people, and therefore also to practical consumption over collecting as a motive for Hadice's acquisitions.⁸⁴ Since at least the 1720s, the Ottoman court had known that their whole approach to eating was different from the Europeans.⁸⁵ Ottomans, elite or commoners alike, did not have special dining halls; they ate very quickly and in complete silence; numerous small courses were served in deep dishes or large plates from which individual spooned their own helpings; there were no table cloths, knives, forks, plates, glasses, or salt cellars. The very act of acquiring European-style table services would seem to indicate that all this was changing. The most notable difference between Ottoman and European dining habits, however, was the absence of women at any public, collective meal. Could it be that in the era of Selim, or at least in the context of Selim's special relationship with his sister, there was a significant change in this last regard?

Selim III is known to have paid frequent visits to his sisters and half-sisters, which became all the more regular during Ramadan. He visited Hadice repeatedly for *iftar* banquets, and even had apartments reserved for overnight stays at Defterdarburnu. We have no account of any other guests Hadice might have entertained in her brother's honour, or of what was served at these banquets, but there can be hardly any doubt that her best porcelain would have been used. And at least some of these dinners might not have been secluded affairs. The architectural layout of Neşedâbâd Palace suggests that one of its spacious halls was reserved for gathering over food.⁸⁶ This in itself hints at a departure from the custom of men gathering around trays placed on low stands to eat in groups. But beyond this, we are in no position to say how much further "Westernization" might have been taken—whether this "dining hall" was lit with large crystal chandeliers and decorated by family portraits as was European practice, or whether a long stationary table might

have been placed along its central axis.⁸⁷ European furniture was finding its way even into the elite brothels of Istanbul in the 1790s,⁸⁸ and certainly furnished some parts of Hadice's palace. It is tempting to imagine reformers and anti-reformers alike, seated on gilded Louis XVI chairs, being served with the best European china. Even the type of food served might have helped reinforce a reformist message to guests.⁸⁹ For all this, it is not necessary to speculate further about Hadice's (or other women's) actual presence at the table. Even if she herself were invisible, she would, in effect, be represented by her entire palace, from its neoclassical architecture to its decoration and furnishings—and ultimately by her china. It could all have been read as a message to the effect that change there had to be, and she was there to support Selim III and his reforms to the utmost.

The foregoing might sound plausible, but while it is not contradicted neither is it supported by any concrete evidence. We must turn to the first scenario, which suggests that Hadice was a collector. One of the two probate inventories drawn up in 1822 is a list of contents of a treasury or a safe—or, perhaps, a special room where rare and curious things were kept.⁹⁰ It turns out to be a list of objects that were sold after Hadice's death. What is striking is that many of the fragile objects listed in this inventory were in boxes (*kutu*), baskets (*sepet*), or casks (*fıçu*), or on large circular trays (*tabla*). In addition to the aforementioned porcelains and crystal wares, their contents were listed as small wares (*hırdavat*), costumes, jars of *confiture*, copper ware, crystal chandeliers, and diverse other items. Unlike the other inventory, this list also includes pieces of furniture such as cabinets (*dolab*), chests (*sanduk*), or chests of drawers (*çekmece*). Altogether, the list suggests a whole roomful of curiosities, objects which were not in daily use but had been amassed for the purposes of building a collection kept hidden from most eyes.

All things considered, does Hadice the Younger appear as no more than a consumer, or does she qualify as a collector? Are the sheer number, variety, and quality of the objects she owned—which required such effort and riches to acquire, as well as the care and knowledge that went into their classification and protection—enough to identify Hadice as a collector, and of European porcelain in particular? I would argue that the answer has to be positive. First and foremost, Hadice's porcelain collection was quantitatively significant by any standards. While the estates of her peers held tens of mirrors of varying sizes, clocks of different kinds, quantities of chandeliers or furniture, and hundreds of curtains, items of bedding, or table services,⁹¹ Hadice appears to have owned only half the amount of such goods, but several times more porcelain.⁹² Secondly, to a greater degree than her peers, her intent seems to have been to use her wealth and power to demonstrate her access to a modern style of living and Western achievements. Thirdly, the desire for control, the patience, the competitiveness, and the excitement of the hunt embodied in the



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Small lidded bowl, Vienna, dated 1799. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 26/4752. After *Osmanlı Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri*, 54.



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13
Set composed of a mug, a lidded jug and two plates, Vienna, dated 1785. Sadberk Hanım Museum, Istanbul, HK 243-3306, Env. HK 216-3279 A-B. After *Sadberk Hanım Museum*, 145.

furnishing of her palace(s) and in her correspondence with Melling all point to a particular, peculiar personality. Fourthly, her porcelains (and crystal glass) were kept in containers, in a special room, in a cabinet of curiosities. And lastly, she was one of a few Ottoman princesses who wanted to find a way to dissociate herself from the rest of the wealthy through her collecting tastes. The mass production of porcelain which began in Meissen and Vienna in the early eighteenth century, while catering to larger, privileged populations in Europe, may also have been a factor in fashioning the identity of a new elite in Istanbul. Collecting it certainly entailed competition and rivalry—even among the royal ladies whose belief system had long required them to find identity and meaning in their lives through pious deeds. Thus, collecting porcelain can be seen as an aspect of their quest for an independent, opinionated, confident, worldly, and modern identity.

It has been argued that in Western literary texts portraying both women and china, we see “how the female as an object of male desire became, over the course of the long eighteenth century, the female as desiring subject.”⁹³ Here “china is less the marker for woman’s status as object,” but “more the indicator of an ideological struggle to shape woman’s situation as a desiring subject within a particular domestic economy.”⁹⁴ For Hadice, “modern” and “Western” were synonymous, and seemed to signify or to facilitate, more than anything else, her empowerment as a woman, a princess, to take responsibility in state affairs. Her presence in dining halls and at dinner tables would have been a public and revolutionary event in itself. Although we may never know whether she attended such dinners or not, it is more likely that she collected European luxuries to display them at private parties. Nevertheless, as a typical princess of the eighteenth century, with personal revenues and palaces of her own, the radical and insurgent in Hadice the Younger, matched with her innate curiosity, may have been attracted by the difficulties and risks of Western commerce and it was this that nurtured her desire to collect.

Hadice’s attitude towards material riches differed from that of her sisters and nieces in several ways. The most revealing evidence in support of her disposition to modern lifestyles is her employment of Antoine-Ignace Melling and her effort to communicate with him in person. She had, after all, not only had her palace remodelled with some architectural features overtly alluding to European forms, but had also amassed significant numbers of certain kinds of expensive and hard-

to find goods from leading European centers of production in order to decorate the interior—all through his mediation. At the time of her death, two decades after his departure, not only porcelain and crystal ware, but also numbers of chandeliers, delicate and breakable, were still being kept in their boxes in a special room (see above). Even if not all had been purchased by Melling himself, such luxuries were certainly introduced by him into the palace he had been busy refurbishing for ten years.

Unfortunately, we are not in a position to understand fully Hadice's methods of acquiring luxury porcelain and crystal ware, even though we can identify at least one group of her creditors or purveyors, who, when she died, each came forth to demand his share from her steward.⁹⁵ These were merchants or dealers themselves, or connected to the likes of Manasses Athanes (see above), who placed orders with the Meissen factory in the 1730s. However, although her taste and knowledge of, or her desire for European porcelain cannot be documented (even) from the letters she exchanged with Melling, it is this correspondence which shows how aggressive and pushy she could be when she set her mind to possess something. Collection-building is often an outlet for focusing emotions (such as envy, frustration, despair, success, triumph, or a compulsion to consume), and may turn into a quest for self-completion.

In this regard, it is important to note the many other princesses who had nothing to do with collecting.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, as quite a few of Hadice's aunts, half-sisters, cousins, or nieces also acquired European porcelains, albeit in a smaller way, it is possible to hypothesize that some royal women in Istanbul were using their collectibles as a form of competitive connoisseurship. Even if these ladies were not yet genuine collectors who possessed Hadice's kind of scavenging instinct, competition and rivalry must have motivated them to continue to collect despite all the difficulties of long-distance trade. Naturally not all would have shared Hadice's political agenda, but they still sought to make their acquisitions not just larger, or better, but also (more) complete—perhaps by acquiring a complete set of porcelain, or several such sets. This might also explain their lack of interest in Oriental antiquities or contemporary polychromed wares, which did not come in “sets.”

The concept of a whole table service with matching components was still novel in the 1730s, and the first dinner service to be made in porcelain was ordered from Meissen in late 1731. Earlier, Du Paquier had produced a partial dinner service, possibly composed exclusively of tureens, in the mid-1720s; between 1736 and 1740 he made another service—composed primarily of tureens and wine coolers—that Emperor Charles VI gave to the Russian empress Anna Ivanova.⁹⁷ But by the 1800s numerous sets were in the market, and the competition for a complete one was fierce. It seems that Hadice and other collector princesses would have had to

compete for a complete dinner service not only amongst themselves, but also with some of the most resourceful European royal or aristocratic ladies of the time.⁹⁸ As the majority of her porcelains were recorded as single pieces at the time of her death, we are not in a position to estimate how many complete services she possessed.⁹⁹

If Beyhan was pious and Esma notorious,¹⁰⁰ perhaps Hadice the Younger was not only competitive but also ambitious. Palmira Fontes de Costa states that “Such an absorption ... is seen in many cultures as a source of danger for the soul and, as such, the object of extreme distrust.” In early eighteenth-century London, “The desire for novelties was understood as a stimulus to trade, and objects of curiosity were treated as luxury items. The commercial society that produced such items was often perceived as morally ambiguous and this affected the evolution of curiosity. In Britain, authors such as David Hume and Adam Smith were at the forefront of utilitarian attempts to dissociate luxury from this negative connotation and to view it positively as an element of a civilized society.”¹⁰¹

Making a Statement through Taste and Knowledge

One of the three engravings that Melling included in his *Voyage pittoresque* to illustrate the Neşedâbâd Palace shows a ceremonial reception hall during a visit by Hadice the Younger’s half-sister Beyhan Sultan. No furniture of the kind that Melling was providing her is visible. Two rows of ladies-in-waiting are lined up in twos, and another twosome are waiting to serve coffee, sweet drinks, *confitures*, and desserts.

On such occasions, as with other imported objects, European porcelains would have acquired additional meanings. Hadice’s tastes would have been up for judgment. She might also have regarded this as an opportunity to demonstrate her connoisseurship, her expert knowledge of the trademarks, the materials used, the artists, designs, or colour schemes. Also under scrutiny would be her acquaintance with the centers of industry and the arts in major European cities, her awareness of technological, social, institutional, and aesthetic advances in the West, and her appreciation of different styles and standards of life. She is likely to have acquainted herself with such matters through the testimony of numerous Ottoman travelers and bureaucrats who, upon Selim III’s initiative, were moving in and around Europe, and buying porcelain wherever possible. Perhaps female eye-witnesses of European civilization were also present at her receptions. Then museums and private collections, operas and theatres, as well as the academies and manufactories that they might have visited, could have been the topic of table talk. Unlike the Oriental china acquired by Hadice the Elder, which was treated by Ottoman royalty as any inherited collection of fine tableware, preserved, venerated, and used as a fit-

ting adjunct of their status, European porcelain called forth “more than plain wonderment at or respect for the distant civilization that produced it.”¹⁰²

Details such as trademarks, decorative schemes, or artists—the kind of specifics that art historians would look at today in order to qualify any group of objects as a collection—could have been provided through commercial intermediaries as well; but only if Hadice were actually concerned with acquiring this kind of expertise. Both the steward of her household, a high-ranking bureaucrat appointed by the government to oversee the princess’s finances, and the chief purveyor (who acted as a middle-man between Hadice, her steward, and outside merchants), would be chief among her sources of information. Until 1800 the latter position was filled by Melling, who was also instrumental in developing contacts and arranging visits by members of European envoys’ households to the Neşedâbâd Palace. A letter from Hadice mentions the visit of an ambassador’s wife,¹⁰³ while the text of the *Voyage pittoresque*, two thirds of which is based on Melling’s own account, describes the visit of Count de Ludolf (the ambassador of the King of the Two Sicilies) and his family. In return for Hadice’s gifts of cashmere shawls, embroidered Indian textiles, candies, and perfumes, the ambassador is said to have presented her with porcelain vases (perhaps from the Capodimonte factory near Naples) as well as precious stones. During this visit, while Mademoiselle Amoureux, the daughter of the former French consul in Izmir, played the harp and two other young girls danced, not only the princess but the sultan, too, accompanied by Melling, were looking on—the last two from behind the curtains.¹⁰⁴

What was the idea behind such visits? Was it no more than curiosity—an opportunity to peek into the personal world of the other? Or was there a more calculated expectation of a two-way flow of information and ideas? Hadice could keep up with European fashions and ways of life, while the word about her and her riches would also spread; the modern patroness, distinguished for her refined taste and up-to-date knowledge of foreign things, would be known to all. This recognition is what some collectors crave, risking the criticism, suspicion, and mere jealousy of those who come to view their collections.

A Scapegoat?

Melling himself remarked that Selim III genuinely cared for Hadice. He noted in the *Voyage pittoresque* that the sultan shared with her his detailed plans to familiarize the “devout and unbending” Muslims with European arts and civilization.¹⁰⁵ Hadice Sultan appears to have adopted Selim III’s ideas and preferences as her own. Given the clash between reformists and conservatives in court circles at the time, however, her disposition towards things novel and foreign could have been regarded as overly transgressive. We do know that numerous rumors about her

spread, including one alleging an intimate relationship between her and Melling, and that from 1796 to 1800 Selim III distanced himself from Hadice.¹⁰⁶ In 1800 Melling was apparently forced to quit Hadice's service, and in mid-1802 he left Istanbul for good. Whether the reason for his departure was the strained political atmosphere in Istanbul or in post-revolutionary France, or private difficulties between him and his patroness, we may never discover. It is clear, however, that immediately afterwards, the sultan resumed his visits to his half-sister.

Antagonism between the reformists backing Selim III and the conservative "party" in opposition was quite severe at the time. Later, with an agenda of promoting the new mercantilist policies in general and opposing luxury imports in particular, the bureaucratic elite of the nineteenth century turned to blaming the female desire to acquire and to collect for the court's wasteful extravagance.¹⁰⁷ The very same polemic had been voiced by Ottoman critics of the import trade throughout the eighteenth century. Mehmed Atâullah Efendi, a disciple of the renowned Nakşî-Müceddidî scholar Tokadî Mustafa Efendi, was appointed as the Şeyhülislâm in November 1806 and blamed Selim III for his sisters' taste for European imports. The ideological backgrounds of these critics, their stand *vis-à-vis* the Mevlevî and Nakşibendî-Müceddidî coalition, and their associations with other orders and social groups have yet to be explored. However, there are interesting leads.

A member of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite, Moravî Süleyman Penâh Efendi (d. 1785), wrote in a treatise that the Ottomans' craving for Western or Eastern goods was rooted in the false belief that these were of better quality; their disposition to foreign goods was motivated by conspicuous consumption and the temptation of luxury; and that because of their ill habits, and under the "new circumstances" (namely, customs regulations, monopolies, and protective tariffs), Ottoman currency was bound to flow out. In his opinion, local/national products were not of poor quality, and there was all the necessary potential for manufacturing in equal quality, quantity, and variety in the Ottoman realm. Penâh Efendi, who arrived at these conclusions on the basis of his observations of textile and porcelain imports,¹⁰⁸ also noted a growing interest in luxury consumption in a certain wealthy social group.¹⁰⁹ Later, Mehmed Said Halet Efendi (see above), writing from Paris as Ottoman ambassador to France, compared the outlook of the French economy with the Ottoman situation. He claimed that if, by some unexpected turn of events, five factories producing snuff, paper, broadcloth, crystalware, and porcelain were to be established, there would be no grounds for any unfavourable criticism of the Ottomans, for it was (basically) these five items that the French exported.¹¹⁰ At the time of Halet Efendi's report, Süleyman Penâh Efendi's son Yusuf Agâh Efendi was serving as the deputy to the grand vizier, and was also a minister of the interior. He was appointed three times to this post over the period 1799–1806, having



14

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Ewer-and-basin set, Vienna, dated [17]93. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 16/1193, 16/1194. After *Osmanlı Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri*, 48-9.

served in London as the first permanent Ottoman ambassador in Europe between 1793 and 1797. Then he became steward to one of Hadice's nieces, Hibetullah Sultan, who was notorious for her excesses.¹¹¹ Both Mehmed Said Halet Efendi and Yusuf Ağâh Efendi belonged to the reform party under Selim III: while the former has been identified as a prominent Nakşi-Müceddidi, Yusuf Ağâh Efendi is known for his patronage of a Kadiri convent at Üsküdar.¹¹²

Hadice inhabited a world in which complex personalities such as these, with first-hand experience of European novelties and standing for change and modernization, could also promote a pure society of believers, the *‘asr-ı saâdet*, the felicitous age of the Prophet Muhammad. The *Vasiyetnâme* (or *Risâle-i Birgivi*) by Imam Birgivi, a sixteenth-century scholar renowned for his polemical writings on purging religion of all “blameworthy innovations” and accretions, was recommended to the Nizâm-i Cedid soldiers and regularly published by the Mühendishane printing house after 1803.¹¹³ Annotated copies of this and the *Şerh-i Âmentü*, also attributed to him, were widely circulated among the Selimian elite; the latter, annotated by Kadızade Ahmed bin Mehmed Emin, was dedicated to Hadice Sultan in 1804.¹¹⁴ It was in this rather radical (puritan) atmosphere that rationalist currents, including new positions on diplomacy, economics, and trade in the Ottoman Empire, were beginning to emerge.

At this point it should be noted that a discourse about European women's alleged craze for oriental china translates perfectly into the Ottoman context. Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, for example, has written that in England "like other imported commodities—silk, tea, and cotton—china drew the female consumer into a national debate about the debilitating effects of a home economy indebted to foreign trade." Quoting Louis Landa, she goes on to say that the mercantilist economic thought of the period often assumed that "the importation of luxuries [was] not economically desirable, the logic being that imported luxuries have an adverse effect on the balance of trade." Because women were stereotypically identified as the principal consumers of such imported products, they most often bore the brunt of a mercantilist polemic.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, contemporary literature in the West took fine china or porcelain as emblematic of women and their weaknesses. The image of china often functioned as a marker of female superficiality and shallowness, or of a potential for female depravity expressed through an unwarranted attraction to things that were new, beautiful, expensive, sensual and sumptuous.

Proceeding from the observation that (in the West) "femininity is an ongoing historical construction, one subject to changing economic interests and pressures," recent studies on consumption have demonstrated the presence of varying agendas in the historical construction of women as consumers. Thus over most of the eighteenth century it was "mercantile capitalism which had indulged, even sanctioned, a 'feminine' appreciation of imported commodities like china when such an appreciation promoted mercantile interests."¹¹⁶ Critics of a formalistic approach point to how eighteenth-century discourses have attributed "mercantile capitalism itself, with all of its attractions, as well as its ambiguous consequences" to women, "whose marginality allows them to serve, in the writings of celebrants and satirists alike, as a perfect proxy or scapegoat."¹¹⁷ Against this, a new critical approach insists that the construction of women as consumers of imported luxuries is not a fixed historical reality but an ideological process. In support of this analysis it may be said that in the Ottoman world, in the absence of mercantilist ideological fuss, (a) men were no less inclined to "acquire" china than women, as a study of the probate inventories reveals; and (b) such male consumerism was not stigmatized as effeminate.¹¹⁸

A comparison of how Hadice and her sisters were portrayed in contemporary Istanbul-based European accounts with the satirical portrait of a female china-lover in English literature in the same period may be quite illuminating.¹¹⁹ In Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* (1818), a certain Lady Juliana, whose husband is on the verge of financial ruin, inspects various bibelots brought by a china merchant to her drawing room in London. Also presented for her consideration is "an amazing delicate article, in the way of a jewel: a frog of Turkish agate for burning pastilles in." This, she is told, is especially valuable "for it was the favourite toy of one of the sultanas, till

she grew devout and gave up perfumes.” Kowaleski-Wallace, remarking that “Lady Juliana’s enthusiasm for these items associates her with Oriental aesthetism: she now appreciates the very trinkets that tired the sultana,” shows how Lady Juliana stands out as a sardonic portrait of her self-gratifying class.¹²⁰ There could hardly be any more stereotypical condemnation of “decadent” Oriental aesthetics, or of the “perversity” of Lady Juliana’s tastes. If its message were to be translated into the Ottoman realm, Hadice’s tastes and inclination to Western aesthetics would also be portrayed as disrespectful, corrupt, and immoral. It, too, would have served to shift blame for imperial excesses or bankruptcy onto the shoulders of royal women.

Most Ottoman princesses who received Chinese or European porcelain as gifts normally used, or broke, or otherwise dispensed with them. Both Hadices seem to have collected in order to distinguish themselves (and their privileged status) from the rest. At the same time, it seems that their desires were not quite controllable, so that in the end both were turned into scapegoats by critics of the elite to which they belonged. Ottoman princesses of the late eighteenth century were avid consumers, conspicuous and necessary displayers of mercantile riches. They were displaying something that was very different from the outmoded form of corrupt dynastic privilege. However, viewed in a historical context, both Hadices, like some of their aunts, sisters, and nieces, appear as political types but not as independent agents. If not their desires, then at least their new way of fashioning themselves, and hence their public appearances and mobility, were under control.¹²¹

It is Hadice’s genuine love for European porcelain which reflects, perhaps more than anything else, her outstanding position among the staunchest supporters of liberal reforms. Although the motives, purpose, or modalities of collecting are not always clear, there is a case to be made to the effect that Ottoman princesses of the later eighteenth century acquired porcelains, and particularly European porcelains, in huge quantities not just for practical uses—and even beyond the limits of conspicuous consumption. Upon closer examination, Hadice the Younger appears to have engaged in an early quest for a woman’s identity during the formative dawn of Ottoman modernity.

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NOTES

This study is part of a larger exploration, extending from “The Luxury Trades and the Ottoman Elite’s Acquisition of European Porcelain,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (forthcoming) to “Ottoman Ways of Collecting and Displaying,” *Muqarnas* (forthcoming). The Topkapı Palace Museum’s collection of European porcelains remained closed to researchers throughout the period in which this study was in progress.

- 1 Tülay Artan, “A Composite Universe: Arts and Society in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” in *Ottoman Empire & European Theatre: From the Beginnings to 1800*. Vol. 1, *The Age of Sultan Selim III and Mozart (1756–1808)*, ed. M. Hüttler and H. E. Weidinger (Vienna: Don Juan Archiv, forthcoming).
- 2 George W. Gawrych, “Şeyh Galib and Selim III: Mevlevism and the Nizam-i Cedid,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 4 (1987): 96–101.
- 3 For visual arts and artists in this period, see numerous studies by Günsel Renda.
- 4 In line with his standard representation, a recent exhibition at the Topkapı Palace, entitled “Bir Reformcu, Şair ve Müzisyen”, romanticized Selim III, the patron of arts and sciences, as a reformer, poet and musician.
- 5 For an erroneous explanation of *nev-tarz*, taken not as a linguistic trope but to refer only to a particular period, namely the 18th century see: Shirine Hamadeh, “Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the Inevitable Question of Westernization,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63, 1 (March 2004): 32–51. Hamadeh’s representation of the 18th century as a single monolithic block without any internal differentiation is equally problematic.
- 6 While the Mevlevî connection to the reform party, even if it did not include all

Mevlevîs, is obvious, the Bektashi-Janisary identification of the anti-reformist group is reductionist and therefore misleading: Uriel Heyd, “The Ottoman Ulema and Westernization in the time of Selim III and Mahmud II,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 63–96; Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol.1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 273–4. For a select group who were asked to present their criticisms of the state in writing, see Ergin Çağman, *III. Selim’e Sunulan Islahat Lâyihihaları* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2010).

- 7 Identity is a complex and provocative concept. “In common sense language,” says Hall, “identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation.” See Stuart Hall, “Introduction: Who Needs Identity,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), 1–17. For more on identity see also Paul Du Gay, Jessica Evans, and Peter Redman, *Identity: A Reader* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000). For a recent study of the complex picture of identities in the period in question, see A. Yıldız, “Vaka-yı Selimiye or the Selimiye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion” (Ph.D. dissertation, Sabancı University, 2007).
- 8 As their name implies, the Müceddidis were Renewers—but in a religious and conservative sense. As the newly rising branch of the Nakşibendis, who advised “strict adherence to the sharia and the tenets of Sunni-Orthodox Islam which would produce a regeneration of the Muslim community and the state,” they

seem to have been motivated to support Selim's modernization military, administrative, fiscal, educational or diplomatic reforms. See Butrus Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826–1876)* (Istanbul: ISIS Publications, 2001), 12, 43. For Ottoman Müceddidis see comprehensive studies of Halil İbrahim Şimşek.

- 9 For Sirhindi's parting of the ways with Ibn Arabi, see Muhammed Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shari'ah: A Study of Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1986). For the exemplary poetry of Neccâr-zâde Mustafa Rıza (1679–1746), see Halil İbrahim Şimşek, "Mesnevîhân Bir Nakşbendiyye-Müceddidiyye Şeyhi: Neccâr-zâde Mustafa Rıza'nın Hayatı ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri," *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 6/14 (2005): 159–78.
- 10 In contrast, before the Portuguese expansion of the early sixteenth century, porcelain was very rare in Europe. The great bulk of the Oriental merchandise which reached Europe before 1500 was purchased from Muslim traders in Egypt or the Levant. While a few pieces were brought to Europe by travellers, most of them arrived as diplomatic gifts. See David Whitehouse, "Chinese Porcelain in Medieval Europe," *Medieval Archaeology* 16 (1972): 63–78. For missions engaged in "tribute and trade" between China and its neighbours, see Michael Rogers, Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındı, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 118–19, ills. 79 and 80.
- 11 Besides trading and diplomatic exchanges, looting of defeated cities was another way to obtain Chinese porcelain, but there are no complete Inner Treasury records of the porcelains seized in Safavid Persia or Mamluk Egypt between 1514 and 1680.

For a complete analysis of the collection see R. Krahl, in collaboration with N. Erbahar, *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapı Palace Museum Istanbul: A Complete Catalogue*, ed. John Ayers, 3 vols. (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet Publications, 1986). Also Takatoshi Misugu, *Chinese Porcelain Collections in the Near East: Topkapı and Ardebil* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1981).

- 12 In the latter part of the nineteenth century the accumulated material and artistic wealth of the Ottomans was partially transferred to a new generation of palaces on the Bosphorus. As the court moved out of the Topkapı Palace the European porcelain reserve of the Treasury moved with them. Abdülhamid II, who played a crucial role in this transfer, also initiated the establishment of a museum at the Yıldız Palace. The decision to display Chinese porcelains was taken in 1909—shortly before Abdülhamid II's final deposition. Curiously, it was Ernst Zimmermann, the director of the Staatliche Porzellansammlung in Dresden, who was invited in 1910, and again in 1925 and 1927, to prepare this Chinese collection for exhibition, and also to introduce to the public the European porcelain collection of the Topkapı Palace. For studies of the collection by Zimmermann, see "Die Porzellanschatze des kaiserlichen Schatzhauses und des Museums zu Konstantinopel," *Cicerone* 3 (1911): 496–503; idem, *Altchinesische Porzellane im Alten Serail. Meisterwerke der Türkischen Museen zu Konstantinopel*, Bd. II (Berlin/Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1930). Pazi identified the European porcelain in the Topkapı collections as the products of German (Meissen, Berlin, Fürstenberg, Höchst, Nymphenburg, Limbach, Volkstedt, Tettau), Austrian (Vienna), French (Sèvres, Limoges, Paris),

Russian, Italian, and Dutch factories: Mukaddes Pazi, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Avrupa Porselenleri Koleksiyonu," in *Kemal Çiğ'a Armağan* (Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yayınları, 1984), 166.

- 13 Julian Raby and Ünsal Yücel, "Chinese Porcelain at the Ottoman Court," in Krahl, *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapı Palace*, 1:27–54 (esp. 35, 37, 47).
- 14 Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi (hereafter TSMA), E. 8990/1; E. 8990/2 (3 Za 1237/1822); D. 7205 (1237/1822).
- 15 Raby and Yücel, "Chinese Porcelain at the Ottoman Court."
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Tülay Artan, "The South Sea Bubble and Ottoman Speculators in the Tulip Market", paper presented at Huizinga Instituut (Amsterdam), PhD Course, *Istanbul, City of Contrasts. Cultural Transfer Between Europe and Turkey*, Istanbul, May 31–June 5, 2010.
- 18 Zeki Sönmez, "Türk Çiniciliğinde Tekfur Sarayı İmalatı Çiniler", in *Osmanlı'da Çini Seramik Öyküsü*, ed. Ara Altun (Istanbul: IMKB Yayınları, 1997), 215–21; F. Yenişehirlioğlu, "İstanbul Tekfur Sarayı Osmanlı Çini Fırınları ve Eyüp Çömlekçiler Mahallesi Yüzey Araştırmaları," *XII. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 30 Mayıs–03 Haziran 1994 (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1995), 535–66.
- 19 For his artistic patronage, see Geza Von Habsburg, *Princely Treasures* (New York: Vendome Press, 1997), 179–98.
- 20 Jessie McNab Dennis, "J. G. Herold and Company: The Art of Meissen Chinoiserie," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, n.s., 22, no. 1 (Summer 1963): 10–21; Oliver Impey, "Export Art of the Edo Period and Its Influence on European Art," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4, *Special Issue: Edo Culture and Its Modern Legacy* (1984): 685–97.

- 21 Anette Loesch, "Böttger Stoneware and Böttger Porcelain," in *The Glory of Baroque Dresden: The State Art Collections Dresden* (Jackson, Miss.: The Mississippi Commission for International Cultural Exchange, 2004), 199.
- 22 For "Türkenkoppchen," see Anette Loesch, "Zum Einfluß der Türkenmode auf das Meißen Porzellan," in *Im Lichte des Halbmonds. Das Abendland und der türkische Orient* (Leipzig: Peter Lang, 1995), 272–4, cat. nos. 426–35, 332–34; eadem, "Böttger Stoneware and Böttger Porcelain," 201. See also Klaus-Peter Arnold and Verena Diefenbach, eds., *Meissener Blaumalerei aus drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1989), 170f (cat. nos. 99f), 214 (cat. no. 129). For early Ottoman orders, see Ernst Zimmermann, "Die Anfänge der Blaumalerei im Meissener Porzellan," in *Mitteilungen aus den Sächsischen Kunstsammlungen 2* (1911), 72–81 (80, ill. 3); idem, "Deutsches Exportporzellan des 18. Jahrhunderts für die Türkei" in *Belvedere. Monatsschrift für Sammler und Kunstfreunde* 9/10, no. 54 (1926): 193–98.
- 23 Göksel Sonat, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi'ndeki Osmanlı Zevkiyle Yapılmış Avrupa Porselenleri," in *Osmanlı Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri* (Istanbul: SUSSM Yayınları, 2005), 14.
- 24 Loesch, "Zum Einfluß der Türkenmode auf das Meißen Porzellan," 272–4, 333 (cat. no. 433). Amongst the later ware, two coffee-cups (one of which remained undecorated) and three Chinese-style blue-and-white cups are also exemplary: *ibid.*, 273 (cat. nos. 434 and 435) and 332–33 (cat. nos. 426–32). See also Bearb. Von Rainer Rückert, *Meissener Porzellan 1710–1810* (Bayerisches Nationalmuseum: München, 1966), 144 (no. 711); Hermann Jedding, *Meissener Porzellan des 18. Jahrhunderts in Hamburger Privatbesitz*. (Museum für Kunst and Gewerbe: Hamburg, 1982), 141 (no. 134); *The Constance I. And Ralph H. Wark collection of Meissen Porcelain* (Cummer Gallery of Art: Jacksonville, 1984), 220 (nos. 496, 497).
- 25 *Sadberk Hanım Müzesi* (Istanbul: SHM Yayınları, 1995), 118–19 (HK 208–3271, HK 209–3272, HK 232–3295).
- 26 Pazi, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Avrupa Porselenleri Koleksiyonu," 166.
- 27 Early Saxony wares were stamped with the initials AR (*Augustus Rex*) and KPM (Koeniglichte Porzellan Manufaktur), or KPF (Koeniglichte Porzellan Fabrik). Around 1723 Meissen ware was stamped with Chinese symbols. From 1725 until 1730 the KPM stamp was used together with two crossed swords, after which, variations of the crossed swords became the symbol of Meissen ware. Concern that this symbol would not be tolerated in the Islamic world caused the manufacturers to invent another one, a snake around a scepter, or a whip, to be used on products to be exported to the Ottomans. Although this practice was limited to a short period (1721–3), it is still noteworthy evidence of the extent of Ottoman demand. Until the late nineteenth century, "Türkenkoppchen" were often not stamped at all unless with Chinese symbols.
- 28 Pazi, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Avrupa Porselenleri Koleksiyonu," 166 and 173 (Ill. 5).
- 29 "Zum Einfluß der Türkenmode auf das Meißen Porzellan," 344 (cat. no. 456).
- 30 Eveline Sint Nicolaas, et al., *An Eyewitness of the Tulip Era: Jean-Baptiste Vanmour* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 2003); Olga Nefedova, *A Journey into the World of the Ottomans: The Art of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671–1737)* (Milano: Skira, 2009).
- 31 Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, "Graphic Sources for Meissen Porcelain: Origins of the Print Collection in the Meissen Archives," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 31 (1996): 105–07, figs. 22, 23, 24.
- 32 For Meissen-branded porcelain Janissary figurines (1730–40), see Göksel Sonat, "European Porcelains," in *Topkapı Palace* (Istanbul: Akbank, 2000), 431. For figurines based on the drawings of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour and William Hogarth (1697–1764), see *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes nations du Levant* (Paris, 1714–15) and Aubrey de la Motraye, *Travels Through Europe, Asia and into Parts of Africa II* (London, 1723). For more figurines, see Loesch, "Zum Einfluß der Türkenmode auf das Meißen Porzellan," 274, cat. nos. 363, 366–71, 377, 379–82, and pp. 311–18; *Türkei. Abendland begegnet Morgenland 16.–18. Jahrhundert. Eine Ausstellung im Rahmen der Internationalen Tage Ingelheim* (Essen: Verlag Hermann Schmidt Mainz), 1992, 152–53, cat. nos. 112–21, 125, pp. 190–97.
- 33 The Russo-Ottoman war of 1768–1774 caused a serious crisis in east-central Europe and in the Balkans as Prussia and Austria backed Russia throughout.
- 34 *Osmanlı Sarayında Avrupa Porselenleri*, 34–5.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 36 Sonat, "European Porcelains," 429.
- 37 HK 198-3261 A-B, originally part of the ambitious private collection of Hüseyin Kocabaş : *Sadberk Hanım Museum*, 145.
- 38 Loesch, "Zum Einfluß der Türkenmode auf das Meißen Porzellan," 343, cat. no. 452. For a lidded jug in yellow, see cat. no. 453.
- 39 HK 194-3257 A-B: *Sadberk Hanım Museum*, 144.
- 40 Pazi, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Avrupa Porselenleri Koleksiyonu," 166.
- 41 *Ibid.*, ill. 2 (ca. 1730); Sonat, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi'ndeki Osmanlı Zevkiyle Yapılmış Avrupa Porselenleri," 46–47 (ca. 1735).

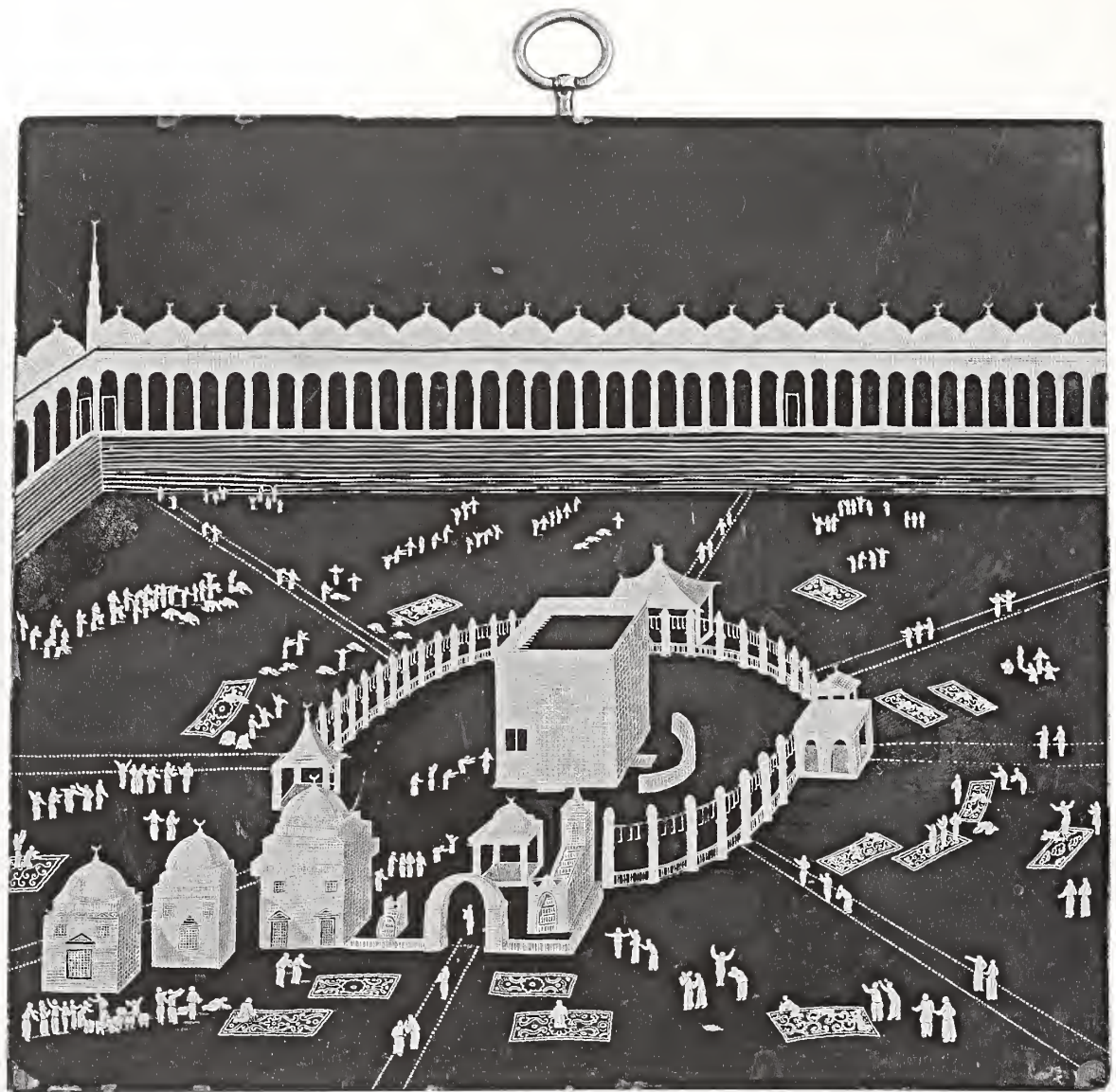
- 42 Sonat, "European Porcelains," 421; eadem, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi'ndeki Osmanlı Zevkiyle Yapılmış Avrupa Porselenleri," 16.
- 43 TSM, 16/769: Sonat, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi'ndeki Osmanlı Zevkiyle Yapılmış Avrupa Porselenleri," 50–51.
- 44 TSM, 26/4752: Sonat, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi'ndeki Osmanlı Zevkiyle Yapılmış Avrupa Porselenleri," 54–5. Sadberk Hanım Museum, HK 243-3306, HK 216-3279 A-B; *Sadberk Hanım Museum*, 145. A very similar lidded dish, albeit on a plain yellow background, is TSM, 16/682 (1798).
- 45 For a saucer and a coffee-cup with the names of the Ottoman ambassador to Vienna in 1791, Ratib Ebubekir Efendi, and his wife Refika Hanım, inscribed in gold, see *Bir Reformcu, Şair ve Müzisyen: Sultan III. Selim Han* (İstanbul: IBB Kültür A.Ş., 2008), 128–9. See also a ewer-and-basin set dated 1793 (TSM, 16/1193, 16/1194) and two jars dated 1795 (TSM, 16/718, 16/717): Sonat, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi'ndeki Osmanlı Zevkiyle Yapılmış Avrupa Porselenleri," 48–9 and 52–3 respectively.
- 46 See, for example, a lidded bowl (made 1805–27), decorated with a cityscape and a sea battle, with a paddle-wheel steamer carrying a red Ottoman flag on a white background, with a pink rose for a handle, in the Sadberk Hanım Museum, HK 213-3276 A-B: *Sadberk Hanım Museum*, 143.
- 47 When the company was reformed and shares redistributed, the king owned a third of the shares and most of the other shareholders were from the circle of Madame de Pompadour: Svend Eriksen and Geoffrey De Bellaigue, *Sèvres Porcelain, Vincennes and Sèvres 1740–1800* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 35–6; after Moira Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics: Gendered Vessels* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 167. Following the French Revolution, the Assembly of 1790 nationalized the factory.
- 48 Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics*, 168–9.
- 49 Eriksen and De Bellaigue, *Sèvres Porcelain, Vincennes and Sèvres 1740–1800*, 37.
- 50 Emmanuel Cooper, "European Porcelain: Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, Scandinavia, the Low Countries and Russia, Britain and Ireland," in *The Thousand Years of Pottery* (London: The British Museum Press, 2000) (1972, 1981, 1988), 166–70.
- 51 On this see Pazı, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Avrupa Porselenleri Koleksiyonu," 169.
- 52 Signed by Gilbert Drouet, a flower painter: Pazı, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Avrupa Porselenleri Koleksiyonu," 170, ill. 1.
- 53 For the grandvizier's and the Reisülküt-tab's orders of bowls, plates and textiles in 1803, see Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (hereafter BOA), 4 Numaralı Hatt-ı Hümayun Kataloğu, 5808/0.
- 54 Millet Kütüphanesi, Raşid Efendi nr. 630/5, 113b. See also Maurice Herbet, *Une Ambassade Turque sous le Directoire* (Paris: Librairie Académique Didier, 1902); Erol Üyepazarcı, trans., *Fransâda İlk Daimi Türk Elçisi "Moralî Esseyit Ali Efendi" (1797–1802)* (İstanbul: Pera, 1997), 64.
- 55 Enver Ziya Karal, *Halet Efendinin Paris Büyük Elçiliği (1802–1806)* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1940), 25–26. I was able to locate the two documents in question: BOA, HAT 140 [5808/O] (29/Z/1217); and HAT 139 [5744] (05/S/1219).
- 56 See Michael Rogers, "Ottoman Luxury Trades and Their Regulation," in *Osmanische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vanzo Boskov*, ed. H. G. Mayer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986), 135–55; Edhem Eldem, *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 1999); N. Elibol, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı-Avusturya Ticareti" (Ph.D. dissertation, Marmara University, 2003); idem, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Avusturya Topraklarında Faaliyet Gösteren Osmanlı Tüccarları," *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 15 (2004): 62–7; idem, "XVI–XVII. Yüzyıllarda Avusturya'nın Doğu Ticareti" (forthcoming); idem, "XVI–XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Rumeli ve Orta Avrupa Toprakları Arasındaki Ticaret Faaliyetleriyle İlgili Bazı Tespitler," (forthcoming); A. Mesut Küçükcalay and Numan Elibol, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna Avrupadan Karayolu ile Yapılan İhracatın Değerlendirilmesi, 1795–1809," *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 4, no. 1 (2004): 29–54; A. Mesut Küçükcalay, "İzmir Efrenc Gümrüğü Mukataasına Ait 1802–1805 Tarihli 15 Adet Defterin Analizi," *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 16 (Güz 2004): 215–23; idem, "İzmir Efrenc Gümrüğü'ne Ait Bir İrad Defteri'nin Analizi ve Ticaret İlişkin Sonuçlar (1797–1799)," *Belleten* 70, no. 257 (2006): 265–88. See also a recent collection of articles, *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (Paris, Louvain and Dudley, Mass.: Collection Turcica, 2008).
- 57 C. Louise Avery, "European Ceramics Given by R. Thornton Wilson," *The Metropolitan Museum Art Bulletin*, n.s., 15, no. 9 (May 1957): 192.
- 58 For the new kind of life these princesses pursued, see Tülay Artan, "Early 20th Century Maps and 18th–19th Century Court Records: Sources for a Combined Reconstruction of Urban Continuity on the Bosphorus," Proceedings of the symposium "La città Islamica attraverso i catasti. Strumenti per la ricostruzione

- del processo tipologica," 5–7 July 1991 in *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Center* 13–14/1993 (1996): 96–111; eadem, "Eyüp'ün bir Diğer Çehresi: Sayfiye ve Sahilsaraylar," in *Eyüp: Dün / Bugün Sempozyumunu Bildirileri* 11–12 Aralık 1993 (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994); "Boğaziçi'nin Çehresini Değiştiren Soylu Kadınlar ve Sultanefendi Sarayları," *Istanbul Dergisi* 3 (Oct. 1992) (republished in English as "Noble Women Who Changed the Face of the Bosphorus and the Palaces of the Sultanas," *Biannual Istanbul* 1 (Jan. 1993): 87–97; eadem, "A Triple Wedding Procession of 1724: Urban Festival or Court Ritual?", in *Royal Courts and Households*, ed. Tülay Artan, Jeroen Duindam and Metin Kunt, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, forthcoming).
- 59 By contrast, porcelain produced in Meissen, Vienna, or Paris was desired by the educated and wealthy consumers in Europe who sought a fine but affordable range of tablewares. They preferred decorative schemes which represented their contemporary interests rather than those associated with the court culture, which were the most rare and costly. Thus, the traditional role of displaying and representing was now shared by the emerging classes, the new bourgeoisie. See Sarah Richards, "A True Siberia: Art in Service to Commerce in the Dresden Academy and the Meissen Drawing School, 1764–1836," *Journal of Design History* 11, no. 2 (1998): 112; Gunther Sterba, *Meissen Domestic Porcelain* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1991), 48.
- 60 Raby and Yücel, "Chinese Porcelain at the Ottoman Court".
- 61 The other collection was that of Esad Paşa, Governor of Sivas, whose six celadon and 3,098 Chinese porcelain pieces were appropriated by the state in 1759 from his three palaces in Syria. In 1684 the state acquired 417 pieces from Muazzez Sultan, wife of Süleyman II, and after the death of Gevherhan Sultan, daughter of Sultan Ibrahim in 1696, 244 pieces were returned to the treasury. See Raby and Yücel, "Chinese Porcelain at the Ottoman Court."
- 62 See A. Göksel, "The 'Surname' of Abdi As a Sample of Old Turkish Prose" (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 1975), 97 (49b).
- 63 All the surviving kitchen records of Hadice Sultan are dated 1743, ending two months before her death. See in particular BOA, D. HSK 25713 (1155); D. HSK 25714 (1155).
- 64 Vak'anüvis Subhi Mehmed Efendi, *Subhi Tarihi. Sâmî ve Şâkir Tarihleri ile Birlikte (İnceleme ve Karşılaştırmalı Metin)*, ed. M. Aydın (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2008), 23 (6b).
- 65 *Relation des deux rebellions arrivées à Constantinople en 1730 et 1731 dans la déposition d'Achmet III et l'élévation au trône de Mahomet V, composé sur des mémoires originaux reçus de Constantinople* (Le Haye, 1737), 16–17. After Münir Aktepe, *Patrona İsyanı (1730)* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1958), 139.
- 66 Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics*, 164–5.
- 67 Neé princess of Saxony (granddaughter of Augustus III), she was married to Charles III of Spain (r. 1759–88), originally of Bourbon, and then the King of the Two Sicilies. Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics*, 164.
- 68 A German princess (neé Sophia Augusta Frederica) who became the Empress of Russia after 1762 as wife of Peter III of Holstein-Gottorp. Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics*, 165.
- 69 Married to King Frederick V (r. 1746–66). Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics*, 165.
- 70 Neé Duchess Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, wife of George III (r. 1760–1820). Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics*, 170.
- 71 McNab, "J. G. Herold and Company," 15.
- 72 Janine Terrasson, *Madame de Pompadour et la création de la "Porcelaine de France"* (Fribourg: Office du Livre, 1969), 30.
- 73 Hadice's relationship with Melling recalls that of Madame de Pompadour and her dealer. "She acquired vast numbers of small art works many of which were purchased through the dealer Lazare Duvaux and were recorded in his books. At times she would send lists of orders on a weekly basis or even more frequently. Porcelain was among her most common purchases, but often combined with ormolu to add to its effect": Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics*, 167.
- 74 Accounts of Europeans in Istanbul at the time include (sometimes conflicting) references to Melling's professional association with the royal ladies: A. Castellan, *Lettres sur la Morée, l'Hellespont et Constantinople*, Tome II (Paris, 1820), Lettre xxxviii; J. C. Hobhouse, *A Journey Through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople 1809–1810* (London, 1813), 863; J.-E. Beauvoisins, *Notice sur la cour du Grand-Seigneur, son serail, son harem, la famille du sang imperiale, sa maison militaire, etc* (Paris, 1809 [1807]).
- 75 Cornelis Boschma and Jacques Perot, *Antoine-Ignace Melling (1763–1831): Artiste-Voyageur* (Paris: Musée Carnavalet, 1991); Cornelis Boschma and Zwolle Waanders, *Antoine-Ignace Melling, Lettres de Hollande et des villes anséatiques: La correspondance d'un artiste-voyageur avec sa famille à Paris en 1812* (Paris: Fondation Custodia, 1997).
- 76 BOA, HH 57452 (1205).
- 77 Antoine-Ignace Melling, *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives de Bosphore. D'après les dessins de M. Melling* (Paris, 1819).

- 78 Frederic Hitzel, "Correspondence Between Antoine-Ignace Melling (1763–1801) and Hatice Sultan", in *Proceedings of the International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World 2* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002), 221–5.
- 79 Jacques Perot, Frederic Hitzel, and Robert Anhegger, *Hatice Sultan ile Melling Kalfa. Mektuplar* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001).
- 80 "I don't want the [arm] chair(s). I did not like it. I want gilded chairs. I want them as soon as they arrive": Perot, Hitzel, and Anhegger, *Hatice Sultan ile Melling Kalfa*, 53 (Letter 20) and 38–39 (Letters 6 and 7). For a few examples of these armchairs, see C. Cimilli, "III. Selim Döneminde Topkapı Saray Hareminde Mobilya," *Antik Dekor* 112 (April–May 2009), 82–91. In her probate inventory there are a few dozen gilded chairs (*iskele* and *sandalye*): TSMA, E. 8990/1.
- 81 He was simultaneously the envoy of Denmark and Saxony. Together with his eldest son, who was ambitious, pro-French, and indiscreet, to the point of spreading rumors among the embassies, Hübsch served Sultan Selim and had access to other highly placed Ottomans: Alexander H. De Groot, "Dragomans' Careers: The Change and Status in Some Families Connected with the British and Dutch Embassies at Istanbul, 1785–1829," in *Friends and Rivals in the East: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, ed. Alastair Hamilton, Alexander H. De Groot, and Maurits H. Van den Boogfert (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2000), 238–9.
- 82 After M. Çağatay Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları* (Ankara: TTK, 1986), 105: TSMA, D.10610 (1237/1822).
- 83 For Hadice's probate inventories, see TSMA, E. 8990/1 (1237); sale on July 22, 1822: E. 8990/2 (3 Za 1237); sale of items that were no longer usable and listed with the estates of others: D. 7205 (1237). The money raised at auction came to a total of 104,038,5 *guruş*, but her standing debt to a number of her creditors was finally paid by Mahmud II on September 10, 1822: TSMA, E.6124 (25 Zilhicce 1237).
- 84 In several other probate inventories of the period, European porcelain is sorted according to its primary colors, indicating originally complete services.
- 85 See F. Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 37–44.
- 86 For a reconstruction of the palace, see Sedat Hakkı Eldem, *Boğaziçi Yalıları. Rumeli Yakası I* (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1993), 76–7.
- 87 In fact, in one register there were twenty-nine chandeliers and in another sixteen, which had not been unboxed, suggesting that they were not meant to be used but to be kept as collectibles. The unprecedented number of portraits of Mustafa III and Selim III, oil paintings in rather unusual dimensions, suggests that they were gifts from the sultans in question to the royal ladies and were meant to be hung on walls. One such portrait was returned to the Topkapı Palace after the death of Şah Sultan: *Bir Reformcu, Şair ve Müzisyen*, 104–5.
- 88 For a 1793 *Bahnâme* (Book of Pornography) illustrating European furniture in an Istanbul brothel, see Christie's, London, June 18, 1998, lot 189. The illustrations are extraordinarily novel and detailed and the luxurious brothel in question appears strikingly *à la mode*, its decor relating to palace interiors.
- 89 Özge Samancı, "Culinary Consumption Patterns of the Ottoman Elite during the First Half of the 19th century," in *The Illuminated Table, the Prosperous House, Food and Shelter in the Ottoman Material Culture*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph Neumann (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2003), 161–84. For a list of foodstuffs allocated to Hadice from the imperial kitchens, see BOA, KK 7253, 55a (7 Muharrem 1201).
- 90 TSMA, E. 8990/2 (3 Za 1237).
- 91 For Esma's and Beyhan's estates, see TSMA, D. 413 (1264), D. 2656 (1264/1848) and D. 2646 (1240/1824) respectively.
- 92 For dragoman, diplomat and writer Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson's account of Western furniture such as chests, console-tables, lustres, chandeliers and tables in use in imperial palaces, see F. M. Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 40.
- 93 Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 54. See also Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, "Women, China and Consumer Culture in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 2 (1996): 153–67.
- 94 Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 54.
- 95 TSMA, D. 10610 (1237/1822). In contrast, numerous household accounts of Şah, Beyhan, Hibetullah, and Esma do survive.
- 96 Schnapper, arguing against the systematic and uncritical application of the interpretation that all princely acts, including accumulating or collecting art and curiosities, celebrate glory and power as well as decorating life and household, proposes to study the meaning of princely collections in the framework of dynasties and territorial units, to examine the realities of specific cases, and to recognize

- the importance of different conditions and the temperaments of each collector: Antoine Schnapper, "The King of France as Collector in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17, no. 1. *The Evidence of Art: Images and Meaning Meaning in History* (Summer, 1986): 187–8.
- 97 Jeffrey Munger, "German and Austrian Porcelain in the Eighteenth Century," *Heilbrun Timeline of Art History* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003).
- 98 Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). For banquet scenes and table settings from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European palaces, see Stefan Bursche, *Tafelzier des Barock* (Munich: Editions Schneider, 1974); Philippe Perrot, *Le Luxe: Une richesse entre faste et confort, XVIIIe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1995); Lorenz Seelig, "Drinking Vessels and Display Platters for Courtly Tables and Buffets," "Late Baroque Wall-Mounted Buffets in Berlin and Dresden," and "The Eighteenth-Century Dinner Service," in *Silver and Gold: Courtly Spendour from Augsburg* (Munich: Prestel Publications, 1995), 15–21, 31–38, 43–49; and Daniel Roche, *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 54–78.
- 99 As a matter of fact, Hadice's porcelains that were put up for auction were not complete table sets, or even tea or coffee sets. It is a pity that no record of her bridal gifts and trousseau of 1786, repeatedly mentioned in a general way in documents pertaining to her marriage, has so far been located.
- 100 For Beyhan and Esmâ see: Tülay Artan, "Orta Halliliğin Aynası: Terekeler Işığında 18. Yüzyıl Ortasında Eyüp ve Civarında Yaşam Tarzı ve Standartlarına Bir Bakış," in 18. Yüzyıl. Kadı Sicilleri Işığında Eyüp'te Sosyal Yaşam (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 49–64; eadem, "Eyüp'ün bir Diğer Çehresi: Sayfiye ve Sahilsaraylar," in *Eyüp:Dün/Bugün*. 11–12 Aralık 1993 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), 106–115.
- 101 Palmira Fontes da Costa, "The Culture of Curiosity at the Royal Society in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 56 (2002): 147. On the relationship between luxury and curiosity see also Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. Harold Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Hutchinson, 1982); Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- 102 John Ayers, "Introduction," in Krah, *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapı Palace*, 1:16.
- 103 Perot, Hitzel, and Anhegger, *Hatice Sultan ile Melling Kalfa*, 47.
- 104 Melling, *Voyage pittoresque*.
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 Melling himself mentions Baş Ağa's opposition to his activities. Selim III's estrangement is gleaned from a daily journal: Sema Arıkan, III. Selim'in Sırkatibi Ahmet Efendi Tarafından Tutulan Rûznâme (Ankara: TTK, 1993).
- 107 A misogynist statesman, historian, and legist, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1822–1895) was foremost in castigating Ottoman princesses for conspicuous consumption and for the collapse of the Treasury: *Tezâkir* 13–20 (Ankara: TTK, 1986). For a study of a spendthrift princess, uncritically reflecting Ahmed Cevdet's views, see Ali Akyıldız, *Mümin ve Müsrif Bir Padişah Kızı. Refia Sultan* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998). Ironically, both of Ahmed Cevdet's daughters, Fatma Aliye (Topuz) (1862–1936) and Emine Semiye (1864–1944), rose to fame as writers and novelists, and are counted among the first Ottoman feminists.
- 108 Millet Kütüphanesi Ali Emiri 677/1737: Aziz Berker, "Mora İhtilâli Tarihçesi veya Penah Efendi Mecmuası," *Tarih Vesikaları* 2, nos. 7–12 (1942–3): 63–80, 153–60, 228–40, 309–20, 385–400, 473–80. He claimed that porcelain (*fincan* and *tabak*) produced in Austria was no longer as good as it had been. (This observation in the early 1770s is noteworthy as a realistic appraisal of the declining quality of Vienna ware.) If Kütahya production had been subsidized and supported by other means at the disposal of the state, he argued, ceramics of superior quality could have been produced. He asserted that these could even have equaled those of India, because Kütahya raw materials were superior to those of Austria and India: *ibid.*, 399–400, 478.
- 109 He focused especially on those capable and desirous of spending considerable sums on luxury furs and textiles: *ibid.*, 475. See also Yavuz Cezar, "Osmanlı Aydını Süleyman Penah Efendi'nin Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Mali Konulardaki Görüş ve Önerileri," *Toplum ve Bilim* 42 (Summer 1988): 116.
- 110 Karal, *Halet Efendinin Paris Büyük Elçiliği*, 33.
- 111 Meanwhile Yusuf Ağa (better known as Valide Sultan Kethüdası) served Esmâ Sultan the Younger, for whom see Tülay Artan, "Periods and Problems of Ottoman (Women's) Patronage on the Via Egnatia," in *Via Egnatia Under Ottoman Rule, 1380–1699* (Rethymnon: University of Crete Publications, 1996), 19–43.
- 112 Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islâm*, 11; Mehmed A. Yalçınkaya, *The First Permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe: The Embassy of Yusuf Agha Efendi to*

- London (1793–1797) (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 2010).
- 113 Despite his Sufi background, Imam Birgivi (d. 1573) appears in modern literature as a sharia-minded anti-Sufi. Curiously, he is either seen as having a long-lasting influence on those who resisted Ottoman modernization, or as foreshadowing trends which are characteristic of modernity in religion: Rudolph Peters, “Religious Attitudes Towards Modernization in the Ottoman Empire: A Nineteenth Century Pious Text on Steamships, Factories and the Telegraph,” *Welt Des Islams* 26 (1986): 76–105; Gottfried Hagen, “Afterword,” in Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 215–56.
- 114 Kemal Beydilli, *Türk Bilim ve Matbaacılık Tarihinde Mühendishane-Mühendishane Matbaası ve Kütüphanesi (1776–1826)* (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1995), 145, 255–56. For a critic of the state recommending *Risale-i Birgivi* to the soldiers, see Çağman, III. *Selime Sunulan Islahat Lâyhaları*, 49.
- 115 E. Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 58.
- 116 Ibid., 67.
- 117 Ibid., 53. See also Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
- 118 On the other hand, in the light of studies by Shamma and Weatherill, Kowaleski-Wallace argued that “it may well be the case that men collected china, while women actually used it on a wider scale”: Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 57–8. See also Lorna Weatherill, “A Possession of One’s Own: Women and Consumer Behaviour in England, 1660–1740,” *Journal of British Studies* 25 (1986): 131–56; eadem, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660–1770* (Cambridge, 1988); Carole Shammas, *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- 119 For such rumours involving Esma the Elder, see *Memoirs of Baron de Tott, Containing the State of the Turkish Empire and the Crimea, during the Late War with Russia. With Numerous Anecdotes, Facts, and Observations, on the Manners and customs of the Turks and Tartars* (London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, Pater-Noster Row, 1785). Esma Sultan the Younger was another princess who was much gossiped about: see Adolphus Slade, *Turkey and the Turks and a Cruise in the Black Sea* (New York, 1854), 548. See also Artan, “Periods and Problems of Ottoman (Women’s) Patronage on the Via Egnatia,” 38–42.
- 120 Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 65–8.
- 121 Tülay Artan, “Forms and Forums of Expression : İstanbul and Beyond, 1600–1800,” in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).



TRANSLATING VISIONS

*A Japanese Lacquer Plaque of the Haram of Mecca
in the L. A. Mayer Memorial Museum, Jerusalem*

1 (FACING)

Plaque depicting the Ka'aba in Mecca.
Japan, 1780–1800. Black lacquer
with gold *makie* on copper, 15.2 x 17
cm. L. A. Mayer Memorial Museum
for Islamic Art, Jerusalem, L 28–70.
Photograph courtesy of the L. A.
Mayer Museum

Abstract

This article focuses on a curious artifact, a relatively small Japanese lacquered plaque with a depiction of the sacred area (*al-Haram*) of the Ka'aba in Mecca, which is kept at present in the L. A. Mayer Memorial Museum in Jerusalem. The piece belongs to a limited group of Japanese export lacquers dating to the late eighteenth century. In contrast to earlier export lacquers, which generally used Japanese decorative elements applied to European or Japanese types of object, around 1780 a new style appeared that rejected every reference to traditional Japanese design elements in favour of strictly European compositions, subjects, and strategies of visual consumption. It is likely that this shift of taste was the result of the individual initiatives of some of the employees at the Dutch trading station at Dejima on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu.

The plaque's iconography was clearly modeled after an optical print of an engraving by Jan Goeree, which was specifically made as an illustration of the "Templum Meccanum" in *De Religione Mohammedica* by Hadrianus Relandus, first published at Utrecht in 1705 (second edition 1717). This artifact is thus a visual document that illustrates ways of translating visual phenomena in an intercultural context. While introducing the most recent European developments in representation and print technique, the plaque retained the intensely charged material aesthetics of Japanese *makie* lacquer. At the same time it is an outstanding document of the semi-objective and scholarly reception of Islam in Europe at the very beginning of the eighteenth century.

FROM THE MID-SEVENTEENTH to the last third of the eighteenth century a comprehensive fashion for exotic styles prevailed in Europe, subsuming the cultural production of China, Japan, South East Asia, and India under one aesthetic concept, commonly termed by the French appellation of "chinoiserie."¹ The eclectic character of this fashion can be traced back at least two hundred years earlier, to the so-called age of reconnaissance (1450–1650), in which Europe was massively confronted with Asian traded objects, making no sharp distinction between the varied origins of the artifacts and mostly labelling these goods as "Indian" and, later on, "Chinese."² East Asia became an exotic realm in the collective European imagination. Travel accounts seem to have unwittingly enhanced this image,³ and the strange object from far away, with its sometimes intentionally elusive associations, played an important role as a trigger for a comprehensive set of connotations linked to this imaginary Orient.⁴ It is commonly accepted that the concept of chinoiserie came to an end during the late eighteenth century, when a more critical attitude towards the representation of foreign cultures and a fundamental shift in the

underlying epistemological situation were demanded by advocates of the Enlightenment movement.⁵

Research on the phenomenon of chinoiserie has so far been mainly concentrated on classifying objects, tracing the development of style, and distinguishing authentic Asian influences from pseudo-Asian elements. However, recent approaches investigate this fashion in a wider context, including the role of Asiatica as commodity, the functioning of taste as a means of social distinction, and the employment of Asian objects within the iconography of political power.⁶ And yet the mechanisms of visual exchange between Japan and Europe became the subject of extensive scholarly investigation only in the last fifteen years, mainly spurred by the scholarship of Timon Screech.⁷ This short study is a further contribution to the pioneering field—of growing scholarly interest—on the artistic interactions between Japan and Europe.

Entering the first exhibition hall at the L. A. Mayer Memorial Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem, which provides visitors with a general introduction to the art and religion of the world of Islam, one is confronted by a relatively small eighteenth-century Japanese lacquered plaque with a depiction of the sacred area (*al-Haram*) of the Ka'aba in Mecca (inv. no. L 28-70; Fig. 1). The plaque measures 17 by 15.2 centimeters and is approximately 0.3 centimeters thick (1 centimeter thick at the rim). It forms part of the whole ensemble of exhibited objects in the room, functioning as an illustration for the information on the Ka'aba displayed on the wall just next to it, and seems to conform with the other exhibited artifacts associated with the pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*), such as a small nineteenth-century prayer rug, a sixteenth-century illustrated manuscript of *Futuh al-Haramain* (Description of the Two Holy Cities) written by Muhi al-Din Abd al-Rahman al-Lari al-Ansari (d. 1526/7), and an eighteenth-century *qibla* indicator (showing the direction of Mecca) from Istanbul.⁸

A closer look at it, however, reveals to any Muslim viewer a rather unusual depiction of the Haram in Mecca, and one clearly tinted with a rather Western mode of visual rendition. Although the square building of the Ka'aba with its semicircular wall (*al-hatim*) is displayed at the approximate centre of the plaque, therefore forming the focal point of the picture, the whole depiction leaves the impression of a fractional rather than complete view of the holy site. The common depiction of the whole Haram completely surrounded by its four characteristic arcades, which define the sacred courtyard of the Ka'aba, and the typical illustrations of the several additional holy sites in its immediate vicinity are missing. Although the image on the lacquered plaque is an extremely detailed illustration of the southern corner of the Haram's arcades, the beholder gains only a partial view of the sacred area—a rather impressionistic view.⁹ When compared with Ottoman depictions of the

Ka'aba datable to the eighteenth century, be they in manuscripts, on tiles, or on *qibla* indicators, it is notable that here the Ka'aba is depicted without its covering—the *kiswa*. This specific depiction of a 'naked' Ka'aba, so to speak, with its walls totally exposed is unusual in Islamic art. Moreover, in the relatively crowded Haram, the depictions of the different groups of pilgrims occupied with varied activities are quite remarkable. The small figures appear approaching the Ka'aba, praying in front of its four faces or corners, visiting the additional holy pavilions next to it, such as the Station of Ibrahim (*Maqam Ibrahim*), the Zamzam Well, and the two domed structures called *Qubbatayn*, and even venerating the Black Stone at the Black Corner of the Ka'aba. The particular penchant for minutiae in this depiction faintly evokes Chinese or Japanese painting. The pagoda-like pavilion (*Maqam Maliki*), which appears behind the Ka'aba, strengthens this Asiatic, or Far Eastern, aspect.¹⁰

The Object

The front face of the plaque in Jerusalem depicts a bird's-eye view of the Haram area of Mecca in the lower part, occupying approximately three quarters of the panel. The rest is painted with a black lacquer, which most probably indicates the sky above the Haram, or at least should be understood as the background of the sacred view of the Ka'aba's courtyard. The square Ka'aba is depicted in the centre. The fine stone structure of its walls is marked by a minute grid of extremely thin, delicate, and exceptionally precise lines. The northeastern side of the building, between the Black Corner (*Rukn al-Aswad* or east corner) and the Iraqi Corner (north) is shown. This forms its main facade. The main door of the Ka'aba appears on this facade, next to the Black Corner and slightly higher than the ground level in the Haram. The door is divided into two wings, shown as two equal vertical rectangles in black lacquer. This black lacquer probably alludes to the fact that the door is made of material other than stone, or it may suggest that the entrance is wide open. Close to the top of the facade, at approximately three quarters of its height, a narrow and finely drawn band is visible, marked by a smooth layer of gold, which clearly differentiates it from the delicate grid pattern of the wall. This detail is interesting because it probably imitates the band of Arabic inscription which is located exactly at this level on the *kiswa* cloth and encircles the whole building.¹¹ The other visible wall, namely the northwestern wall located between the Iraqi and the Syrian corners, is shown from an angle and steeply foreshortened, stressing the specific perspective from which the whole Haram is depicted, and contributing to the sense of depth of the image. The roof of the Ka'aba is illustrated, too. It is marked by its black color and its edges are painted to suggest a relatively low parapet encircling the whole roof, thus transforming it into a big square terrace. Two small platforms are depicted at the very bottom of the Ka'aba: one of them appears to the right of

the entrance and the other is illustrated at the very centre of the northwestern wall, in the area called *Hatim*, the very spot where the water from the Ka'aba's gutter (*mizab*) is collected.

The area around the Ka'aba (*mataf*), in which the ritual of encircling the shrine (*tawaf*) is performed, is clearly demarcated by a row of slender and relatively tall columns. These columns are bound to each other at the bottom by poles and at the top by chains, from which lamps are hung; the lamps were used to light pilgrims at night.¹² This circle of columns has one main entrance by which pilgrims could enter the *mataf*. This entrance, the Banu Shayba Gate (also called *Bab al-Salam*, the Gate of Peace), is located in front of the Ka'aba's main facade. It consists of a relatively high arch, through which visitors entering the sacred space from the northeast pass and from which the ritual of the *tawaf* also starts. The four other buildings, or rather pavilions, which appear on the edge of the *mataf* are the edifices for housing the different imams of the four main schools during prayers. The square one with the extra domed pavilion on its roof, on the right side of the Ka'aba facing its northwestern wall, is the *Maqam Hanafi*. The pagoda-like pavilion behind the Ka'aba, facing the southwestern wall, is the *Maqam Maliki*. The other square pavilion with a sharply pointed roof, depicted on the left side of the Ka'aba, in front of its southeastern wall, is the *Maqam Hanbali*. The *Maqam Shafi'i* is housed in the large Zamzam Well building shown to the left of the Banu Shayba Gate (see below).

A small pavilion with a domed roof and a small crescent on its summit is located exactly on the main axis between the gate and the entrance door of the Ka'aba. This pavilion is the Station of Ibrahim (*Maqam Ibrahim*), mentioned by several medieval Muslim sources and frequently illustrated in Islamic manuscripts. This is traditionally regarded as the specific spot on which the patriarch Abraham stood when building the Ka'aba. Prints of his feet were miraculously embossed on a stone, which is kept within this building.¹³

A big pulpit (*minbar*) is depicted on the right-hand side of the Banu Shayba Gate, and a transportable staircase appears on its left-hand side, just between the gate and the Zamzam Well building. This staircase (*daraj*), which normally runs on wheels, is pushed up to the entrance door of the Ka'aba to provide visitors with easy access to the inner space; the entrance door of the Ka'aba is located approximately seven feet above ground level, most probably to secure the Ka'aba from flooding and fire.

Three additional stone-built structures appear on the left side of the plaque, next to the Banu Shayba Gate. The three are all square bulky buildings with a domed roof, each of which is topped by a crescent. The first structure, which is also the most imposing of the three, has two arched entrance doors, while the two other buildings have only one each. Two further rectangular openings, most probably



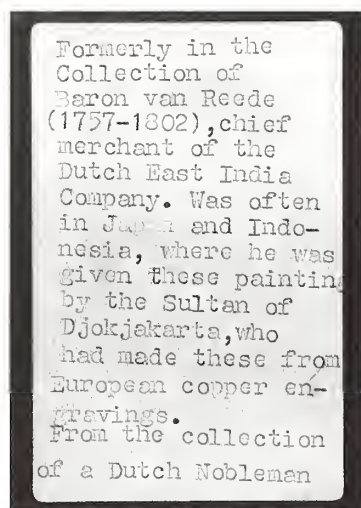
2

2
Verso of plaque in 1. Photograph
courtesy of the L. A. Mayer Museum

windows, appear in each of these buildings, just above the doors. The largest structure is the building in which, according to tradition, the Zamzam Well is located. Tradition also tells us that this well miraculously appeared to Hagar and her son Ishmael in the desert, after both were evicted by Abraham.¹⁴ The two other structures are the *Qubbatayn* (the two *qubbas*, namely domed buildings). Like the small Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali pavilions, these three structures vanished during the course of the rebuilding of the *mataf* in the twentieth century.

The domed arcade surrounding the whole area is drawn with great attention paid to each detail. The lower part is marked by long horizontal lines that probably (and mistakenly) illustrate stairs leading from the Haram to the arcade.¹⁵ Each of the columns in the arcade has a double base, slender shaft, and capital. Hatching on the domes marks light and shade. Three rectangular doors appear in the arcade. The two depicted at the very corner of the arcade, just next to the minaret, are most probably the entrance doors from Bab Umm-Hani and Bab al-Wida, at the south corner of the Haram. The third door appears on the main axis leading the visitors from the Ka'aba via the Maqam Maliki to the arcade and is most probably the one which opens to Bab Ibrahim.

The numerous figures in this scene are all men, similarly dressed in long-sleeved shirts and long wide trousers. The carpets spread on the floor of the Haram are lavishly decorated with floral designs. These are probably prayer rugs. However, it should be stressed that, whereas the single prayer rug is normally spread in front of the Muslim worshipper with its short side nearest to his feet, these are most probably communal prayer carpets that are spread on the floor with their long sides next to the men's feet.



3
Verso of plaque in 1 (detail of attached label with typewritten inscription).
Photograph courtesy of the L. A. Mayer Museum

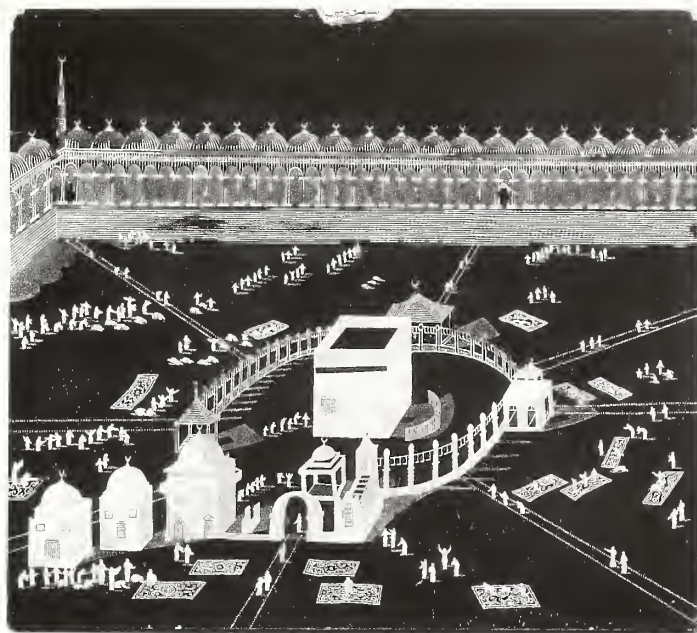
The rear of this plaque is framed by a very thin rim (for its composition, see below) and also covered with black lacquer (Fig. 2). A metal suspension loop is affixed to the plaque's top edge. A finely engraved inscription painted in gold reads, "VUE DU TEMPLE DE LA MECQUE" (View of the temple of Mecca). A small typewritten paper label was later attached, most probably before the object went on sale (Fig. 3). It provides us with the following information: "Formerly in the Collection of Baron van Reede (1757–1802), chief merchant of the Dutch East India Company. Was often in Japan and Indonesia, where he was given these painting[s] by the Sultan of Djokjakarta, who had made these from European copper engravings. From the collection of a Dutch Nobleman." Unfortunately the more recent provenance of this artifact remains unknown. The only information available is its date of entry to the collection of the museum in Jerusalem, namely January 1970, and that it was most probably acquired by Richard Ettinghausen.¹⁶

The plaque closely resembles a sister piece, measuring 15.4 by 17.2 centimeters, in the Groninger Museum, Groningen (inv. no. 1988-309; Fig. 4).¹⁷ The existence of two similar pieces suggests that these items were produced in sets of multiple copies. Moreover, the depiction of the sacred area of Mecca following European pictorial conventions but using the medium of Japanese lacquer raises a multitude of interesting questions, several of which are addressed here.

On Lacquer and *Makie* Technique

East Asian lacquer (*urushi* 漆) is a very peculiar material.¹⁸ It is made from the sap of the lacquer tree (commonly identified as *Rhus verniciflua*),¹⁹ belonging to the family of sumach plants (Anacardiaceae). The raw material is gathered by specialized workers in a process similar to the cultivation of natural rubber. During the harvesting period lasting from mid-June to late September the bark of trees at least ten years old is incised, and a tiny cup affixed to the trunk to collect the leaking sap. As the trees flourish only in mixed cultivation amidst hill forests, the process of collecting is very time-consuming. Even a skilled collector is only able to harvest about 20 milliliters during a 14-hour work day.²⁰ The harvested sap is subjected to a series of refining steps, including filtration, reduction of the natural water content, and oxidation by agitation in the air. The resulting raw lacquer is subsequently pigmented, if desired, and seasoned for several years in sealed containers.

Whereas it will never completely harden in an absolutely dry atmosphere, due to its particular molecular structure lacquer hardens within hours or days when exposed to a high relative humidity. To achieve the best results, Japanese lacquer specialists preferably apply lacquer in thin layers and then place the object in a room (*mōro* もうろ or *muro* 室) especially built and intentionally humidified for that purpose. Once hardened, a resilient coating can be produced, resistant to



4

4
Plaque depicting the Ka'aba in Mecca.
Japan, 1780–1800. Black lacquer with
gold *makie* on copper, 15.4 x 17.2
cm. Groninger Museum, Groningen,
1988–309. Photograph courtesy of
the Collection Groninger Museum –
photograph by John Stoel

water, solvents, and in some degree to heat. Only some acids, ultraviolet light, and brute force are liable to harm the material. Because of its high cohesiveness, since early times lacquer was used as an adhesive and binding agent.

In contrast to the practice common in the manufacture of Japanese lacquers for the domestic market, apparently no textile or paper cladding was attached to the Jerusalem plaque's copper support. Instead the priming (*ji* 地) was applied directly. This was a mixture of fired and powdered clay (*jinoko* 地の粉), rice paste (*kome no nori* 米の糊), and raw lacquer (*ki urushi* 生漆), which was carefully burnished after drying.²¹ The rear of the plaque was similarly prepared and a raised rim built up using the same priming matter. Next, the actual lacquer was applied, probably in no more than two steps, an undercoating (*shita nuri* 下塗) and a top coating (*uwa nuri* 上塗). The copper core may have been heated after applying each one of these.²² The lacquer used was pigmented black with lamp soot or iron filings. After each layer had completely hardened it was thoroughly burnished with water and charcoal, and minor scratches were eliminated. The resulting surface was then coated again with a minimal amount of a specially refined variety of lacquer, and after a very short period of hardening polished with oil and some extremely fine abrasive like powdered buckhorn. The final streaks were eliminated with soft deerskin or the ball of the hand.

Once a plain black surface of the desired perfection had been acquired the execution of the design itself began, using the well-known technique of *makie* (蒔絵, "sprinkled picture"). One section at a time was painted, using yet another variety of lacquer particularly refined for this task (so-called *e urushi* 絵漆). The utmost cleanliness had to be maintained at work to prevent dust from adhering to the freshly painted design, and extreme caution was employed to avoid any lacquer stains on the areas intended to remain black. Gold powder was then sprinkled over the still wet design, to adhere only to the just-painted areas. By using lacquer of two distinct colors for this manufacturing step, red and black, a subtle difference in the resulting gold hue was achieved.

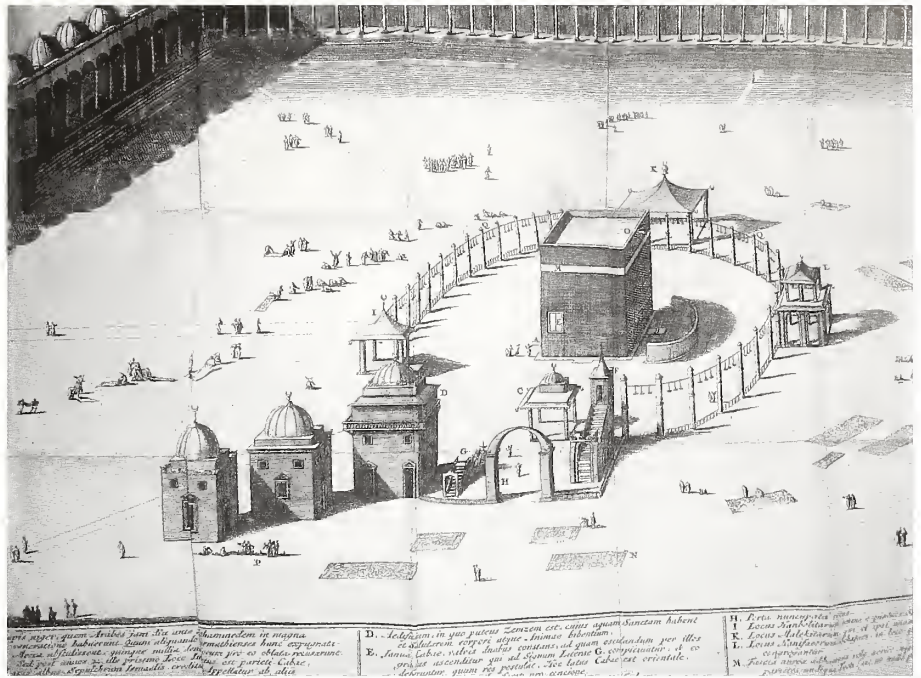
The Mecca plaque from the L. A. Mayer Museum was executed—like the vast majority of export lacquers—in the most basic type of *makie* technique, *hira makie* (平蒔絵 “flat sprinkled picture”), used since the late twelfth century. This leaves the golden designs on the finished piece standing slightly raised above the black backdrop. The relatively simple technique was nevertheless employed skillfully to indicate three-dimensionality through a detailed linear rendition of the Haram site. In many areas, for example, on the row of cupolas surmounting the enclosing arcades, on the central Ka’aba shrine, and on the pavilion buildings to the lower left, the technique was executed in several distinct steps. First a plain expanse in the silhouette of the intended design was applied in lacquer and then sprinkled with gold. Then, after hardening, the hatching was painted on top and again sprinkled with gold powder, resulting in a minutely raised grid in relief, gold on gold (*tsukegaki* 付描). To translate the pictorial language of his source image (see below), the *makie* specialist also used lacquer of two different colors to paint the design, resulting in two distinct hues of gold: contrasting with the red lacquer applied for the general design, black lacquer was most probably used for the dimmer areas of the architecture shaded from the sun.²³

On the better-quality objects intended for domestic consumption the priming was applied in multiple steps and repeated with finer varieties of powdered clay, the so-called *sabi* (錆). The lacquer coating would have comprised several additional layers and possibly an even more painstakingly executed burnishing. In addition, more elaborate types of *makie* would have been employed to achieve a design either perfectly embedded in the backdrop (*togidashi makie* 研出蒔絵) or distinctly raised in relief (*taka makie* 高蒔絵).

The brass ring soldered in the middle of the upper edge of the plaque, permitting the finished object to be hung up on a wall, was probably added at the very end of the process.

Migrating Images: The Historical and Visual Context

The visual source from which the depiction of Mecca on the plaque was copied is an illustration of the Great Mosque of Mecca from *De Religione Mohammedica* by Hadrianus Relandus (Adriaan Reelant, 1676–1718), first published at Utrecht in 1705 (Fig. 5).²⁴ The copper engravings in this book were executed by Jan Goeree (1670–1731). To the best of our knowledge, his depiction of the Haram in Mecca, which appeared in the second edition of *De Religione Mohammedica* (1717) is one of the earliest, if not the first, European images of the site. (The other famous early European depiction of the Haram was made by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) and published in 1721 in his book *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur in Abbildung unterschiedener berühmten Gebäude des Alterthums und*



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Jan Goeree, Detail, *Templum Meccanum* (Sanctuary of Mecca). Engraving. From Hadrianus Relandus (Adriaan Reelant), *De religione Mohammedica, libri duo*, 1717. Utrecht: Trajecti ad Rhenum. Photograph courtesy of St John's College Library, Cambridge

fremder Völker.)²⁵ The heading reads “*TEMPLUM MECCANUM*” (Sanctuary of Mecca) and is followed by a subheading: “*Sanctissimum apud Mohammedanos, et vetustissima religione consecratum*” (most holy to the Mohammedans and sacred by oldest religion).²⁶ Numerous captions assigned to letters marked throughout the picture appear below it. Relandus, who was a professor of oriental languages at the University of Utrecht and who also made his name as a cartographer, was one of the leading Enlightenment scholars and Orientalists of the early eighteenth century. The accuracy and penchant for detail in his image of the Haram emphasize Relandus’s attempt to illustrate the religion of the “Great Other” in a relatively “objective” way. The systematic approach sensed in this image should be understood in the context of the scholarly—in several cases also Protestant—tendencies of the eighteenth century toward dispelling popular misconceptions and prejudices about Islam.

The L. A. Mayer plaque belongs to a limited group of Japanese export lacquer wares usually dated between 1780 and 1800.²⁷ In contrast to earlier export lacquer wares of the eighteenth century, which generally used Japanese decorative elements applied to European or Japanese objects, around 1780 a new style appeared that rejected every reference to traditional Japanese designs in favour of European compositions and subjects. The best-known group is probably that consisting of numerous oval or rectangular portrait medallions depicting contemporary and historical European celebrities, including European rulers and statesmen (Fig. 6), scholars, poets, and artists, from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century.²⁸ The direct models for the portraits were predominantly taken from a small number of European books, which were obviously given to the lacquerers for reproduction. The six-volume *L’Europe Illustré* by Jean-François Dreux du Radier (1714–80), which had been published in Paris between 1755 and 1765 with a total of 593 portraits, was the most often used among these European sources.²⁹ Other medallions were obviously based on an unidentified numismatic publication featuring coins with the likenesses of Roman emperors. Without exception the lacquer medallions



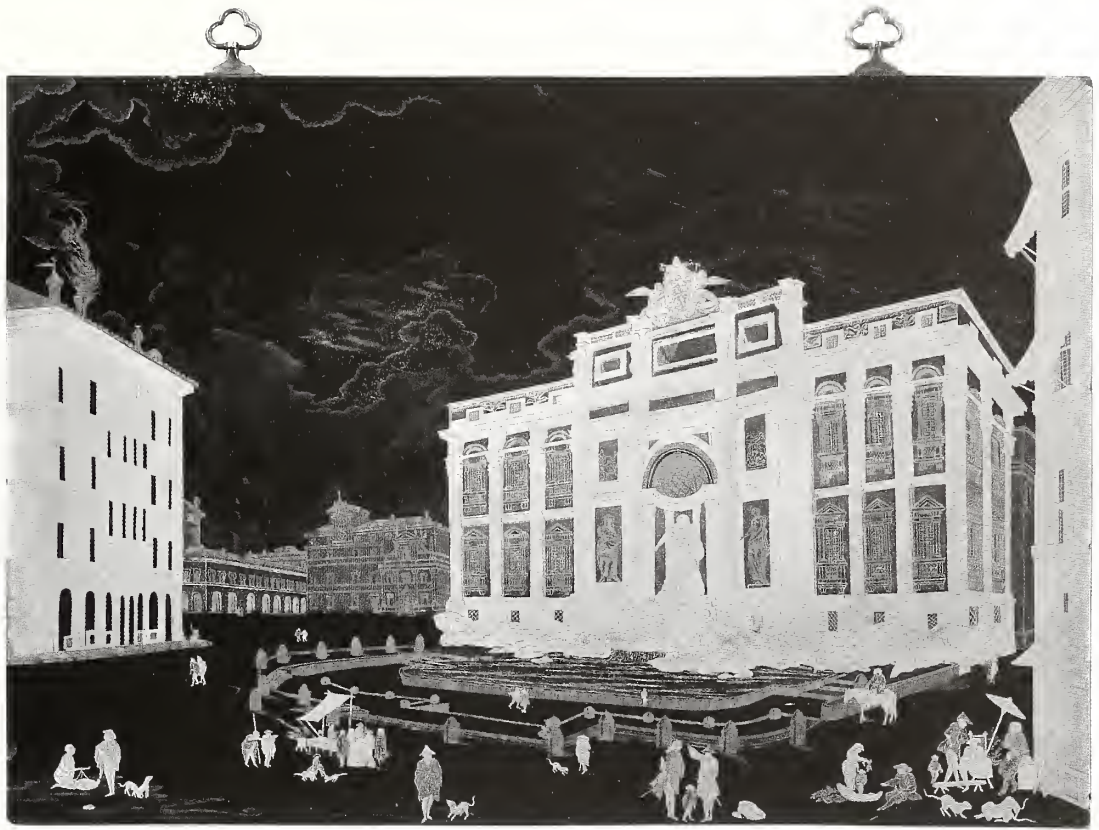
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Medallion with a portrait of Frederick II of Prussia. Japan, 1775–1800. Black lacquer with gold *makie* on copper, 11.5 x 8.8 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, NG-NM-6288. Photograph courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

were originally fitted with metal rings to be hung on a wall.³⁰ In the vast majority of the existing examples a nuanced rendering of the person portrayed in gold *makie* was set against a plain black ground, but a small number were executed in variously colored lacquer, or in highly iridescent mother-of-pearl inlay, creating an accentuated polychrome effect.³¹

Besides the portrait medallions, prominent among the late eighteenth-century export lacquer plaques is a group depicting scenery.³² Most characteristic are cityscapes or interior views of grand buildings, animated with figures and in some instances bustling with life, modeled after the popular eighteenth-century genre of the *veduta*. Sights from contemporary Rome are especially numerous and comprise the Fontana di Trevi (Fig. 7),³³ the Scala di Spagna, the churches of S. Pietro, S. Eustachio,³⁴ S. Giovanni in Laterano, and S. Costanza, and the Palazzo dei Conservatori, Palazzo Doria Pamphili, and Palazzo Corsini.³⁵ Other European cities, such as St. Petersburg,³⁶ Amsterdam,³⁷ and the small Dutch town of Amersfoort³⁸ were also depicted. Two further representations of ancient Rome—a street scene and a fantastic panorama of the palace of Emperor Nero—are remarkable because of their purely imaginative re-creation of Classical antiquity.³⁹ Though slightly later in date (most probably from the beginning of the nineteenth century), another group of lacquer wares on which different battles at sea (Dogger Bank, 1781; Cape St. Marie, 1780) and on land (Hohenlinden, 1800) are depicted might also be associated with the abovementioned works.⁴⁰

The new style of design and the changing interest in lacquer objects toward the end of the eighteenth century are often connected with the individual initiatives of some of the employees at the Dutch trading station at Dejima on the southern



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Plaque depicting the Fontana di Trevi in Rome. Japan, 1780–1800. Black lacquer with gold *makie* on copper, 37 x 53.5 cm. Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo, TNM000698. Photograph courtesy of TNM Image Archives

Japanese island of Kyushu. During the greater part of the Tokugawa period (1615–1868)⁴¹ the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC) was the only European institution permitted to trade directly with Japan. The VOC was a private joint-stock corporation that had been created in 1602 by the fusion of six formerly independent trading companies.⁴² First operating at Hirado, the Dutch were soon transferred to Nagasaki in the course of a comprehensive effort by the Tokugawa government to contain foreign influence on internal policy. In 1641 they were forced to move to Dejima, a tiny artificial island in the harbour of Nagasaki, which had originally been constructed for the Portuguese a few years before.⁴³ Most of the Dutch merchants, rarely more than two dozen permanent residents, never left the island. Only a small number of high-ranking representatives of the company were allowed to make the regularly prescribed journey to Edo, where the chief of the Dejima station (the *opperhoofd*) offered a ritualized affirmation of the company's loyalty to the shogun. Trade was only allowed with approved items, and any imported merchandise related to the Christian religion was interdicted. As far as export was concerned, objects of military use and potential strategic significance were also prohibited. In fact, until the coercive re-opening of Japan by a US flotilla in 1853, European nations had to confine themselves to purchasing Japanese trade goods from the Dutch, or from the Chinese; the Chinese maintained a trading post nearby in Nagasaki harbour and kept up a substantial trade with the West through the South Chinese ports. Since most of the Dutch did not attempt to study the Japanese language, communication lay in the hands of native interpreters, whose accredited profession was hereditary in a limited number of families. Despite these basically unfavourable conditions the profit margins in most cate-

gories of trade were extremely high during the seventeenth century. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century the advantage of this near-monopoly waned, and Dutch profits and the volume of cargo decreased.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, after the VOC was formally abolished during the Napoleonic wars in 1798, Dutch ships continued to come to Dejima.⁴⁵

Besides the official trade, private trade by the employees of the VOC was tolerated within limits.⁴⁶ However, as C. A. Jörg pointed out, with the exception of some seventeenth-century lacquer items featuring European inscriptions and various coats of arms, the commissioning by the Dutch of lacquer wares with pictorial motifs taken from European models is a surprisingly late phenomenon.⁴⁷ During the late eighteenth century, several leading VOC employees were interested in Japanese crafts. The Swedish doctor Johan Arnold Stutzer (physician at Dejima 1787–8), the chief of the Dejima station Isaac Titsingh (in Dejima 1779–80, 1781–3, and again in 1784), and his colleague Johan Frederik Baron van Reede tot de Parkeler (in Dejima 1785–6, 1787–8, and 1789) are known to have ordered lacquers.⁴⁸ In an entry in his diary, Stutzer recorded having given European engravings depicting the city of St. Petersburg and a portrait of “Rudolph XV” to Japanese craftsmen, being probably the first European to do so.⁴⁹ In 1795 he presented a lacquer plaque depicting St. Petersburg (probably the result of the recorded commission) to his then employer, Catherine II of Russia.⁵⁰ It is quite obvious that the scenery plaques and portrait medallions were produced on commission for residents of the trading post of Dejima in Nagasaki.

It seems certain that some kind of business relationship between designated lacquer workshops and European traders was established, and not only in Nagasaki. It is likely that most of the older export lacquers had been produced in Kyoto but on some of the scenery plaques, the name “Sasaya” was applied, as for example in the signature “verlakt bij Sasaya [lacquered by Sasaya] in Japan Ao 1792,”⁵¹ which probably refers to a specific Nagasaki lacquerer or a lacquer workshop carrying this name. Indeed, several craftsmen by the name of Sasaya appear in documents from Nagasaki from the last decade of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century.⁵² On the other hand, some evidence hints that export lacquers were still produced in Kyoto. Lacking any certain evidence at the moment, we can only narrow down the location of workshop(s) producing these particular exported lacquer objects to either Nagasaki or Kyoto.

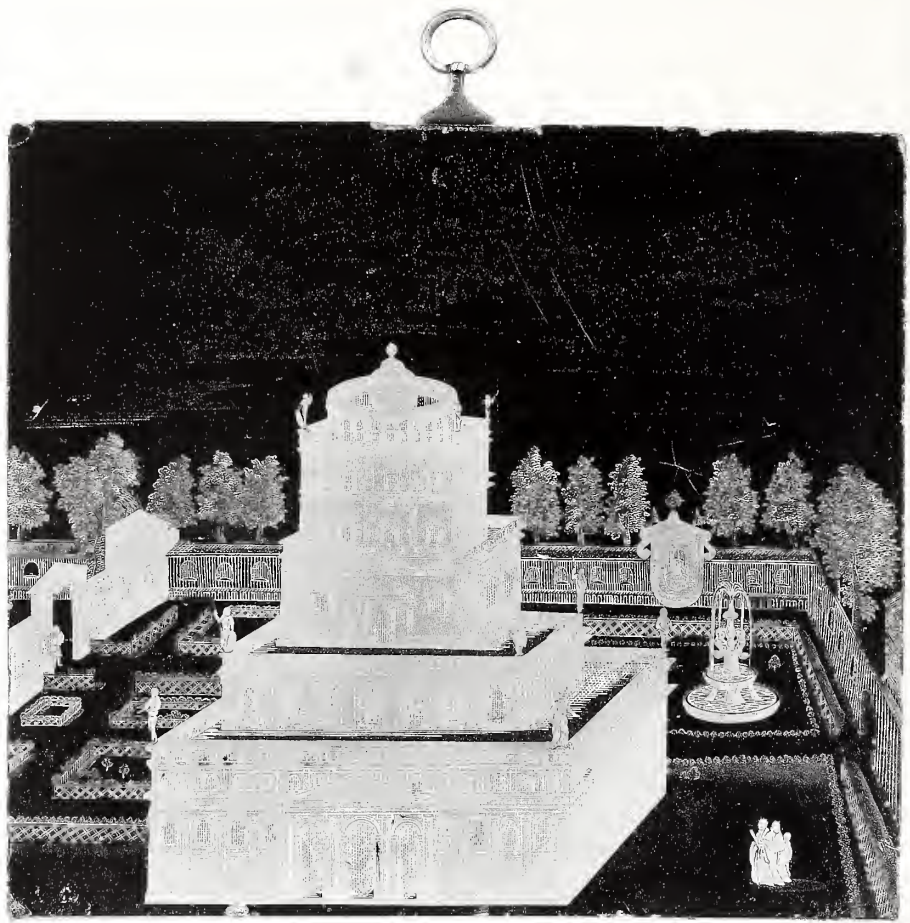
The *vedute* on lacquer plaques were executed by the Japanese *makie* specialists based on copper engravings, which were given to the craftsmen as models by the commissioner. In many instances it can be seen that so-called “optical prints” rather than original engravings were used. These *vues d’optique* were manufactured for use in a particular device called an *optique* or “diagonal viewing machine.”⁵³

The print was placed under the machine and looked at through a subtly magnifying and slightly distorting lens, creating an effect of three-dimensionality. These special prints were reversed and without much accompanying text or keys.⁵⁴ A hint of their intended use in an *optique* is often given by the appearance in the caption of the word “*vue*” which is rarely used in original engravings.⁵⁵ Optical prints and viewing-devices were disseminated in Japan during the second half of the eighteenth century and played an important role in spreading interest in Western science (termed “Holland studies,” *rangaku* 蘭学) and especially in the techniques of visual representation.⁵⁶

The L. A. Mayer Museum plaque is thought to have been modeled after an optical print rather than after the actual engraving by Goeree (see above). For example, in contrast to the original print, there is no heading or subheading on the lacquer plaque, and the captions and ciphers are omitted too. The design displays only the central part of the Ka’aba complex, while the areas to the far right and left of Goeree’s scene are ignored. Also the number and positioning of some of the human figures varies between the engraving and the plaque. Most importantly, the gold inscription on the back of the plaque, “VUE DU TEMPLE DE LA MECQUE” uses the word *vue*, which, as mentioned above, was customarily assigned to optical prints.⁵⁷

Of the late eighteenth-century export lacquers with scenery motifs that have come to our knowledge most are approximately 53 by 37 centimeters, clearly larger than the piece from the L.A. Mayer collection.⁵⁸ As far as we know, there are only two other plaques of comparably small size. The first is the abovementioned plaque in the Groninger Museum (measuring 15.4 x 17.2 cm). However, in comparison to the Jerusalem plaque it makes less use of gold overall and shadows are more subtly rendered in a faint gold hue. The second plaque (measuring 15.2 x 17.3 cm) shows *La Maison & la famemse* [sic] *Tour de Mecéne, d’où on pouvoit voir toute la ville de Rome* (House and famous Tower of Maecenas, from where one could see the whole city of Rome). It belonged until recently to the Mike Dean Collection and is today in different private hands (Fig. 8).⁵⁹ This plaque is particularly notable because at the time of its acquisition by the Dean Collection a label was attached to the back, obviously closely resembling the extant label on the L. A. Mayer plaque. It likewise claimed that the plaque had formerly belonged to the collection of Baron van Reede tot de Parkeler and stated that the object was given to him as a present “by the Sultan of Djokjakarta, who had [it] made from European copper engraving[s].”⁶⁰

The genealogy given on both labels is quite confusing, if not fabricated. Especially puzzling is the information telling us that the lacquer plaque was presented to van Reede by the Muslim sultan of Yogyakarta.⁶¹ The only European trading company to have official access to Japanese lacquers in the eighteenth century was the VOC, and van Reede acted as the chief representative of this company. He is known



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 Plaque depicting the Tower of
 Maecenas in ancient Rome. Japan,
 1780–1800. Black lacquer with
 gold *makie* on copper, 15.2 x 17.3
 cm. Private collection. Photograph
 courtesy of Christie's Images Ltd.

to have been stationed at Batavia on the island of Java prior to and after his service in Dejima. It is therefore tempting to suggest that van Reede acquired this plaque, perhaps as a diplomatic present. One may even argue that the “archaic” flavor of the rendering on the Mecca plaques clearly differs from the more progressive presentation of panoramic and scenic views of the other cities depicted on this type of object and that for this reason the plaques might have been designed for a Muslim audience. On the other hand, the difference in representation probably derives from the sole visual source depicting Mecca that was available to the lacquer artists and the particular context in which the image originally functioned.

Of course, it is possible that the piece from the L. A. Mayer Museum came into the possession of the sultan of Yogyakarta after a complicated peregrination and was then given by him to Baron van Reede for specific reasons. This purely speculative scenario would open a most intriguing direction for further research. Considering the fact that the label is typewritten and self-adhesive and therefore does not precede the twentieth century, the reliability of the information it contains remains questionable. Nonetheless, the similarities of the lacquer plaques formerly in the Mike Dean Collection and from Groningen in technique (gold *makie* with *tsukegaki*), style (drawn after a European model), subject matter (bird's-eye views of architecture), and dimensions, and the existence of the labels both claiming a connection to Baron van Reede and the Sultan of Yogyakarta, probably hint at a common provenance before the twentieth century.

Fascination and Layers of Meaning

The use of Western engravings as models for *makie* designs marks a distinct change in the appreciation of East Asian lacquers in Europe during the last third of the eighteenth century. It is, however, crucial to note that by the eighteenth century lacquer as a material had acquired a distinct set of associations in the European mind, and that European interest in black lacquered objects with gold designs already had a history of about two hundred years. After an initial period of uncertainty about the true nature of Japanese lacquer, during which objects were alternately identified as leather, stone, polished iron, or ceramic, the uniqueness of the material was recognized. The Jesuit missionaries who undertook to proselytize in Japan from the second half of the sixteenth to the first decades of the seventeenth century established a solid understanding of this material.⁶² In 1570 the Jesuit and thorough observer of Japanese culture João Rodrigues (1558/62?–1633/4?) identified the technique of *makie* as a distinctive feature of Japanese lacquer craft. He related that, “It has a certain affinity to the art of painting because among these craftsmen there are some who gild in a special way the finest examples of this kind in the whole world. Using pure gold powder they paint various objects [...] There is nothing more splendid than such things but they are so costly that only lords and wealthy people can afford them.”⁶³

Besides the unattainability of the material and the consummate workmanship involved in its production, the color scheme of black and gold reminded Europeans of well-established materials of high prestige, such as ebony, marble, and inlaid gems. References to the similarity of lacquer with polished stone are frequent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A source from 1587 states: “The [Japanese] nobility have scabbards, that are exquisitely, skillfully and beautifully made from a fine, black, and glossy mixture; mother-of-pearl and other colors are [blended] so artfully and well as if it was a stone, homogeneously grown by nature in this [shape].”⁶⁴

Brilliant gloss is a recurring feature both in accounts of Japan and China and in descriptions of their lacquers. In the widely read work *Histoire de l'expédition chrétienne au royaume de la Chine 1582–1610* (History of the Christian Expedition to the Empire of China) by the pioneering missionary to China, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), edited by Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628), the visual impact of lacquered furniture is stressed: “Everything shines by the glossy bitumen [*sic*] of different colors, that the Portuguese call ‘ciara’; and where engravings are executed, they are properly gilt, and entertain the eyes, similar to [the way] perfumes and fragrant mixtures entertain the nostrils.”⁶⁵ This focus on high gloss is repeated in a huge number of later texts spanning the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Typical is the following passage by Simon de Vries (1624?–1708): “[With this lac-

quer] the Chinese coat their palanquins and furniture, and even whole houses and ships, so that they obtain a gloss like a mirror, for the great pleasure of the eyes. [This lacquering] causes the dwellings of the Chinese and the Japanese to sparkle so intensively, that they seem to smile at the beholders.”⁶⁶

Idealizations like these are in line with a common view, prevailing since the Middle Ages, that saw East Asia in general, and Japan in particular, as a world region of natural riches and incredible material wealth, and inhabited by an amicable populace.⁶⁷ The famous hearsay account of the medieval traveler Marco Polo was widely circulating during the sixteenth century. On Japan he wrote: “There they have gold in the utmost abundance [...] There is a palace, that is completely covered with golden tiles, as we cover our houses or, truly, our churches with lead. The ceilings of the halls and of many rooms consist of very thick panels of pure gold, and the windows are decorated in the same way with gold. This palace is rich to such extent that no one could express its value.”⁶⁸ Despite growing factual knowledge on East Asia such legendary and markedly euphoric descriptions continued. In their influential manual *A Treatise of Japanning* (1688), George Parker and John Stalker pictured Japan outstripping ancient Rome as well as contemporary Rome (the Vatican) in terms of magnificence and richness: “Japan can please you with a more noble prospect, not only whole Towns, but Cities too are there adorned with as rich a Covering; so bright and radiant are their Buildings, that when the Sun darts forth his lustre upon their Golden roofs, they enjoy a double day by the reflection of his beams...”⁶⁹ In the early German encyclopedia by Johann Heinrich Zedler from the 1730s the entry “Lacciren” (to lacquer) informs us: “[To lacquer] means to skillfully paint wooden containers and furniture, that is tables, chairs, gueridons, writing tables, closets, bowls, and boxes, with colors and then to cover them with a pure varnish in that way, that one could take it for marble or East Indian work, or if it had been coated with glass.”⁷⁰ And, during the last decades of the eighteenth century, good lacquer had to possess—it was said—“a shining gloss, and to reflect and refract the sunbeams similar to a piece of crystal.”⁷¹

In the late eighteenth century the origin of East Asian lacquer was no longer a mystery to most Europeans. One publication responsible for the spread in Europe of knowledge about its production was the treatise on East Asian lacquer by Père d’Incarville, which circulated widely as an appendix to manuals instructing European craftsmen how to imitate it. Here he stated, “It is today a known thing in Europe that the Chinese varnish is not a mixture of different materials but a gum or resin that sweats out of a particular tree, that the Chinese call Tsi-chu, the varnish tree.”⁷² But the charm that Asian lacquer exerted on eighteenth-century Europeans mainly rested on the visual characteristics that were still hard to imitate. Despite

these difficulties, a sizeable industry had developed that specialized in imitations of extremely expensive Japanese originals.

In contrast to the undiminished admiration for lacquer as a material and the superior quality of Japanese craftsmanship in the technique of *makie*, criticism of the artistic qualities of Japanese designs was mounting during the course of the eighteenth century. Western criticisms usually centered on compositions being unbalanced, the rendering of human figures being undeveloped, and architecture lacking in convincing spatial disposition. The French author and purveyor of artist's pigments Jean-Felix Watin exclaimed: "I still do not give up the hope that over the years one will discover a varnish in France, to overlay the Chinese lacquer with. Then we would be able to compete with the Japanese, or even surpass them, because our [way of] drawing is way more refined and correct than the Japanese one."⁷³

Parker also remarks, "Perhaps we have helpt them a little in their proportions, where they were lame or defective, and made them more pleasant."⁷⁴

The late eighteenth-century commission of lacquer plaques based on European engravings departed from the previously established taste for chinoiserie in several respects. No longer were the subjects bizarre landscapes populated by exotic birds and mysteriously smiling natives. The topographical detail and the figures prostrating themselves in front of the Ka'aba on the Jerusalem plaque were represented in an ostensibly realistic and objective way. The linear style of the original depiction and its medium, copper engraving, conveyed a new, "scientific" attitude. Yet it is important to note that the plaque's medium (*makie* lacquer) and color scheme (black and gold) still conformed with the traditional visual standards of Japanese lacquer. The plaque could be interpreted as an attempt to unite the best of two worlds—consciously combining authentic black-and-gold lacquer that was highly charged with associations of refined technique, high price, and abundant luxury, with the fashionable European genre of the *veduta* characterized by a detailed and narrative attitude towards landscape scenes. The Mecca plaque's most significant departure from traditional Japanese lacquer objects consists in its format and intended use. In Europe, the tableau (panel painting) was traditionally the highest-ranked format, while in East Asia there was a variety of other formats, including folding screens, hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, and three-dimensional objects. Like European paintings of the tableau type, the lacquer plaque was also intended to be permanently hung up on a wall.⁷⁵ The beholder's eye was therefore fixed to the specific point of display, and usually granted only a single frontal view. In Japan, by contrast, lacquer had been commonly applied to furniture or objects, and, with some exceptions, its designs usually "wrap" around a three-dimensional form. Many of the subtle nuances of the materials and techniques employed unfold their intended effect as soon as the object is slightly moved under a source of light, while

the haptic qualities of the object further augment the complete aesthetic experience for the Japanese audience. Thus, the idea of transferring a European copper engraving to a small tableau in gold *makie* seems to be about adjusting a type of Japanese artifact to Western visual conventions. Moreover, the microadjustment of the scene gave the European beholder the impression of controlling the space and the ability to grasp its unfamiliar characters and features. This commanding view of Mecca produced the feeling of hovering over the city and its holy sanctuary, and of having a hold over it. The alien and foreign elements that might have confronted the beholder when face-to-face with the Other were reduced to minute, and thus less fearsome, factors. More importantly, the borders of the foreign space could also be seen and defined.

At the same time the miniaturization and the fixed viewing position endow the aesthetic experience with intensity and the sense of scientific accuracy, as if a mental focus is achieved by observation. This particular aesthetic recalls Lévi-Strauss's remarks on small-scale artifacts:

What is the virtue of reduction either of scale or in the number of properties? To understand a real object in its totality we always tend to work from its parts. The resistance it offers us is overcome by dividing it. Reduction in scale reverses this situation. Being smaller, the object as a whole seems less formidable. By being quantitatively diminished, it seems to us qualitatively simplified. More exactly, this quantitative transposition extends and diversifies our power over a homologue of the thing, and by means of it the latter can be grasped, assessed and apprehended at a glance.... In the case of miniatures, in contrast to what happens when we try to understand an object or living creature of real dimensions, knowledge of the whole precedes knowledge of the parts. And even if this is an illusion, the point of the procedure is to create or sustain the illusion, which gratifies the intelligence and gives rise to a sense of pleasure which can already be called aesthetic on these grounds alone.... In other words, the intrinsic value of a small scale model is that it compensates for the renunciation of sensible dimensions by the acquisition of intelligible dimensions.⁷⁶

The lacquer plaque from the L.A. Mayer Museum in Jerusalem is a fascinating visual document, which illustrates ways of translating visual phenomena in an intercultural context. It embodies the translation of a fashionable contemporary European print technique into the prestigious Japanese *makie* craft. But, besides the formalist aspects involved in the process of translation, let alone the upgrading of an item of mass consumption to a luxury item, the plaque is a visual document of the

semi-objective and scholarly reception of Islam at the very beginning of the eighteenth century in Europe and its introduction in Japan. The city of Mecca is integrated into a series of panoramic views of important and famous cities of the world alongside Rome, St. Petersburg, or Amsterdam. And yet, the emphasis given to the manifold activities of the pious Muslims in the Haram suggests that this artifact still reflects European curiosity mingled with hunger for *exotismus*, which was and is the characteristic of European intersection with the cities of Mecca and Medina.

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NOTES

- 1 There is abundant literature on the phenomenon of chinoiserie. For an introduction see Chisaburoh Yamada, *Die Chinamode des Spätbarock* (Berlin: Würfel Verlag, 1935); Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay* (London: John Murray, 1961); Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977); and Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993).
- 2 To Schweizer's knowledge, the expression "age of reconnaissance" was first coined by John H. Parry, see John Horace Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance* (Cleveland: World Publishing Corporation, 1963). For the representation and impact of East Asia in pictorial sources see Donald F. Lach, ed., *Asia in the Making of Europe. Part 2: A Century of Wonder*, vol. 2 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970–77).
- 3 See, for example, Friederike Wappenschmidt, *Der Traum von Arkadien: Leben, Liebe, Lust und Farbe in Europas Lustschlössern* (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1990); and Adrian von Buttlar, "Sanssouci und der 'Ewige Osten', Teil II: Zur Deutung des Chinesischen Teehauses," *Die Gartenkunst* 7, no. 1 (1995): 1–9.
- 4 See Danielle Kisluk-Grosheide, "Lack und Porzellan in en-suite-Dekorationen ostasiatisch inspirierter Raumensembles," in *Schwartz Porcelain: Die Leidenschaft für Lack und ihre Wirkung auf das europäische Porzellan*, ed. Monika Kopplin (Munich: Hirmer, 2004). Also see Johannes Franz Hallinger, *Das Ende der Chinoiserie: Die Auflösung eines Phänomens der Kunst in der Zeit der Aufklärung* (Munich: Scaneg Verlag, 1996), 18.
- 5 Hallinger, *Das Ende der Chinoiserie*, 71.
- 6 See, for example, David Porter, "Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 395–411; Michael E. Yonan, "Veneers of Authority: Chinese Lacquers in Maria Theresa's Vienna," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 652–72.
- 7 The most important publication in this context is Timon Screech, *The Lens within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Period Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- 8 For these specific artifacts, see Rachel Hasson, *Masterworks from the Collections of the L. A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art* (Jerusalem: L. A. Mayer Museum, 2000), 14, 15, 65.
- 9 The earliest surviving image of the Ka'aba known so far is one which appears on a ceramic tile from ca. 1104, Iraq Museum, Baghdad, 1149: V. Strika, "A Ka'ba Picture in the Iraq Museum," *Sumer* 32 (1976): 195–201. See also Kurt Erdmann, "Ka'bah-Fliesen," *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959), 192–7; Jean Michot, "Les fresques du pèlerinage au Caire," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 13 (June 1978): 7–21; and Richard Ettinghausen, "Die bildliche Darstellungen der Ka'ba im islamischen Kulturkreis," reprinted in *Richard Ettinghausen: Islamic Art and Archaeology Collected Papers*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1984), 205–43. See also C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1888–9), 2 vols; idem, *Bilder aus Mekka* (Leiden: Brill, 1889); Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, eds., *Muslim Travellers, Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); and Oleg Grabar, "A Preliminary Note on Two 18th-Century Representations of Mekka and Medina," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 268–74.

- 10 For the history of the Haram and the Ka'aba building see mainly K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), vol. 1, part 1, 62–4 and 653–4. See also U. Rubin, “The Ka'ba: Aspects of its Ritual Functions and Position in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Times,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8 (1986): 98–104; s.v. “Ka'ba,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden and London: Brill, 1986) (henceforth *EI2*); and F. E. Peters, *Mecca: A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994). For a specific approach in which the Christian character of the pre-Islamic building of the Ka'aba is discussed, see G. Lüling, *Der christliche Kult an der vorislamischen Ka'aba als Problem der Islamwissenschaft und christlichen Theologie* (Erlangen: Hannelore Lüling, 1992), especially 43–52. See also G. R. Hawting, “The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca,” in *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, ed. G. H. A. Juynboll (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 38–40; Heribert Busse, “Jerusalem and Mecca, the Temple and the Ka'ba: An Account of their Interrelation in Islamic Times,” in *Pillars of Smoke and Fire: The Holy Land in History and Thought*, ed. Moshe Sharon (Johannesburg: Southern, 1986), 236–46; and Nuha N. N. Khoury, “The Dome of the Rock, the Ka'ba, and Ghumdan: Arab Myths and Umayyad Monuments,” *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), 57–65. The famous stone of the Ka'aba was lately discussed by F. Barry Flood, “Light in Stone: The Commemoration of the Prophet in Umayyad Architecture,” in *Bayt al-Maqdis: Jerusalem and Early Islam*, ed. Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, vol. 9, part 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially 316ff. For the early history of the Ka'aba as a treasure house, see Avinoam Shalem, “Made for the Show: The Medieval Treasury of the Ka'aba in Mecca,” in *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, ed. Bernard O'Kane (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 269–83.
- 11 This specific aspect is to be discussed in Avinoam Shalem, *The Kiswa: The Aesthetic of the Sacred* (forthcoming). For a preliminary discussion of the *kiswa* and the aesthetic of seeing in Islam see A. Shalem, “Manipulations of Seeing and Visual Strategies in the Audience Halls of the Early Islamic Period: Preliminary Notes,” in *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft*, ed. Franz Alto Bauer, *Byzas* 5 (2006), 213–32.
- 12 The circular arcade around the *matlaf* was removed in 1956 and is marked today by the black and white intarsia pattern of the marble pavement.
- 13 On the *Maqam Ibrahim* and its history see M. J. Kister, “Maqam Ibrāhim: A Stone with an Inscription,” *Le Muséon* 84 (1971): 477–91.
- 14 For the different traditions and legends, see s.v. “Ka'ba,” *EI2*, 32; also s.v. “Ka'ba” in A. J. Wensinck and J. H. Kramers, eds., *Handwörterbuch des Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 241–3. See also Alexander Fodor, “The Pyramids in Arabic Folk Beliefs,” in *Occident and Orient: A Tribute to the Memory of Alexander Scheiber*, ed. Robert Dán (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 155–65 (in which the Ka'aba is also discussed).
- 15 It is plausible that the Japanese craftsman interpreted the arcade's shadow cast on the floor of the Haram as stairs.
- 16 This object came first to Shalem's attention in September 2006, while paying a visit to the L. A. Mayer Museum in Jerusalem. The authors of this article would like to thank the director of this museum, Dr. Rachel Hasson, who kindly provided us with the three illustrations of the object published in this article. According to Dr. Hasson, apart from the label attached to the rear of the plaque, no further information on the provenance or a modern study of the object exist in the archive of the museum.
- 17 Acquired by the museum from a Dutch private collector in 1988 (personal correspondence by Christiaan J. A. Jörg). Illustrated in Oliver Impey and C. A. Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005), 53, fig. 71. Cf. Jörg, “Japanese Lacquerwork Decorated after European Prints,” in *Tōsai Gakujutsu Kenkyūjo sōritsu sanjū shūnen kinen ronbunshū* 関西大学東西学術研究所創立三十周年記念論文集 (*Collection of Essays in Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies*), ed. Kansai Daigaku Tōsai Gakujutsu Kenkyūjo 関西大学東西学術研究所 (Fukuda: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1981), 77, fig. 21 (there erroneously stated to be lacquered on wood).
- 18 The extreme diversification and complexity of Japanese lacquer techniques necessitate that some of the terms and descriptions of procedures in this article are consciously simplified. For comprehensive introductions to the materials and techniques used, see Sawaguchi Goichi 沢口悟一, *Nihon shikkō no kenkyū* 日本漆工の研究 [A study of Japanese lacquer craft] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1967); Komatsu Taishū 小松大秀 and Katō Hiroshi 小加藤寛, *Shitsugeihin no kanshō kiso chishiki* 漆芸品の鑑賞基礎知識 [Basic knowledge on lacquer objects] (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1997); and Günther Heckmann and Jasmina dei Negri, *Urushi no Waza: Japanlacktechnik*, text vol. and 3 index vols. (Ellwangen: Nihon Art Publishers, 2002). For a concise introduc-

- tion, see also James Watt and Barbara Brennan Ford, *East Asian Lacquer* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991). In most parts still valid is the introduction to the stylistic development of Japanese lacquer given by Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976).
- 19 Sawaguchi, *Nihon shikkō no kenkyū*, 140. Variant names for the species native to Japan, China, and Korea include *Rhus vernicifera* D.C., and *Rhus verniciflua* Stokes. The newer literature also gives the divergent *Toxicodendron vernicifluum*. The domestic varieties in Taiwan and Vietnam, *Rhus succedanea* L., as well as *Melanorrhoea usitata* Wallich in Thailand and Myanmar (Burma), differ in their chemical composition and the resulting properties of the lacquer sap. Cf. Heckmann and dei Negri, *Urushi no Waza*, text vol., 12–13.
 - 20 Sawaguchi, *Nihon shikkō no kenkyū*, 133–9; Heckmann and dei Negri, *Urushi no Waza*, text vol., 14.
 - 21 Sawaguchi, *Nihon shikkō no kenkyū*, 239; Heckmann and dei Negri, *Urushi no Waza*, text vol., 82–7.
 - 22 Katō Hiroshi 加藤寛, “Umi o watatta Nihon shikki III: gihō to hyōgen” 海を渡った日本漆器 III: 技法と表現 [Japanese lacquers that crossed the sea III: technique and expression], *Nihon no bijutsu* 428, no. 1 (2002), 60–61. For an experimental reconstruction of this heating technique (*yakitsuke* 焼付) see *ibid.*, 14, figs. 21(1–4) and 22, and 58–60, figs. 79(a–k) and 80. For this reconstruction the lacquer-coated copper was kept at a constant temperature of 120° Celsius for about four hours. Although the technique was traditionally used in the manufacture of armour and helmets, it is not ultimately clear why it was done. Katō is undecided about this question and offers as possible aims an improved bond between the lacquer and the metal support and the fabrication of a particularly solid priming; it may also have been necessitated by the use of lacquer of inferior quality that would not have properly hardened otherwise. Also see Sawaguchi, *Nihon shikkō no kenkyū*, 197.
 - 23 It should be noted that the image of the Haram on this plaque strongly recalls the widespread and familiar representation of the covered Ka’aba. The likeness is mainly achieved by the reduction of the colors on the plaque to gold and black, which strongly allude to the black color of the *kiswa* and its gold embroidered decoration.
 - 24 Jörg, “Japanese Lacquerwork Decorated After European Prints,” 65–6.
 - 25 For a discussion of Erlach’s depiction of Mecca and Medina, see Grabar, “A Preliminary Note on Two 18th Century Representations of Mekka and Medina.”
 - 26 The mention of the oldest religion might, on the one hand, refer to Islam. But it might also refer to a pre-Islamic religion, perhaps even alluding to the Abrahamic tradition of venerating this site.
 - 27 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 48–57. Hidaka Kaori 日高薫, “Umi o watatta Nihon shikki II: jūhachi, jūkyū seiki” 海を渡った日本漆器 II: 18・19世紀 [Japanese Lacquers that crossed the sea II: 18th and 19th centuries], *Nihon no bijutsu* 427, no. 12 (2001), 50–79.
 - 28 Impey and Jörg suggest that these were manufactured in several thematic series. Two other examples assigned to this group depict a Chinese emperor and a young Japanese man; the model for the latter is assumed to have been a wood-block print. See Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 49–51, figs. 47–65b.
 - 29 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 49.
 - 30 *Ibid.*, 52.
 - 31 See, for an example, Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 49, fig. 48.
 - 32 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 52–7.
 - 33 Also illustrated in Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 東京国立博物館, ed., *Edo makie: Koetsu, Kōrin, Yōyūsai. Sōritsu hyakusanjū shūnen kinen tokubetsuten* 江戸蒔絵: 光悦, 光琳, 羊遊斎: 創立130周年記念特別展 (*Edo Period Makie: Kōetsu, Kōrin, and Yōyūsai. Special Exhibition Commemorating the 130th Foundation Anniversary*) (Tokyo: Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 東京国立博物館, 2002), 145, no. 133; cf. *ibid.*, 200–201.
 - 34 Formerly in the Dean Collection; illustrated in Mike Dean et al., *Japanese Lacquer Nambokucho to Zeshin: The Collection of Mike and Hiroko Dean* (London: Barry Davies Oriental Art, 2002), 187–8, no. 70.
 - 35 The Palazzo Corsini plaque is in the Tokyo National Museum and to Schweizer’s knowledge previously unpublished. For the whole group of vistas, see Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 52. Haino mentions additionally a *veduta* of the Piazza di Popolo in Rome and one of Venice: Haino Akio 灰野昭郎, *Kinsei no makie* 近世の蒔絵 [Makie lacquers of the early modern period] (Chūō Kōronsha 中央公論社, 1994), 123.
 - 36 Plaque in the National Museum of Japanese History, Sakura; illustrated in Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 京都国立博物館, ed., *Makie: Shikkoku to ōgon no nihonbi. Tokubetsu tenrankai* 蒔絵: 漆黒と黄金の日本美 特別展覧会 (*Makie: The Beauty of Black and Gold Japanese Lacquer*) (Kyoto: Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 京都国立博物館, 1995), 165, no. 213.
 - 37 Dated after 1800, this piece is still in its original mounting as the lid of a box for game tokens: Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubut-

- sukan, *Edo makie: Kōetsu, Kōrin, Yōyūsai*, 148, no. 134.
- 38 In the Museum Flehite, Amersfoort. Illustrated in Jörg, "Japanese Lacquerwork Decorated After European Prints", 76, fig. 19.
- 39 See Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 52, fig. 68.
- 40 Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Edo makie: Kōetsu, Kōrin, Yōyūsai*, 146–7, no. 132; Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Makie: Shikkoku to ōgon no nihonbi*, 162, nos. 208, 209.
- 41 The term is more frequently used in art history. The corresponding period of political history is the Edo period (1603–1868).
- 42 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 21. For an introduction to the structure of the VOC see Frank Lequin, "Het personeel van de Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Azië in de Achttiende Eeuw, meer in het bijzonder in de Vestiging Bengalen" [The personnel of the United East Indian Company in Asia in the eighteenth century, in particular in the fortress of Bengal], 2 vols. (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leiden, 1982), in particular 1:64–83. Also see Femme S. Gastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* (Leiden and Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003), 66–107.
- 43 Sometimes also pronounced Deshima (meaning "offshore island"). For basic information on the trading post see Huibert Paul, *Nederlanders in Japan 1600–1854: De VOC op Dejima* (*The Dutch in Japan 1600–1854: The VOC on Dejima*) (Weesp: Fibula van Dishoeck, 1984), 37–123 passim. Also see Ken Vos, "Dejima und die Handelsbeziehungen zwischen den Niederlanden und dem vormodernen Japan," in *Japan und Europa 1543–1929*, ed. Lothar Ledderose and Doris Croissant (Berlin: Argon Verlag and Berliner Festspiele, 1993), 72–82.
- 44 Whereas until 1674 at least four ships had moored at Dejima each year, this decreased to an average of two during the eighteenth century and to only one ship during the nineteenth century: Vos, "Dejima und die Handelsbeziehungen," 77. Also see Christiaan J. A. Jörg, "De handel van de V.O.C. in oosters lakwerk in de 18de eeuw" [The VOC's trade with East Asian lacquerwork in the eighteenth century], in *Nederlandse kunstnijverheid en interieurkunst*, ed. J. P. Filedt Kok et al. (Haarlem: Fibula van Dishoeck, 1981).
- 45 Filip Suchomel, "The Exportation of Japanese Lacquerware to Europe," in *A Surface Created for Decoration: Japanese Lacquer Art from the 16th to the 19th Centuries*, ed. Filip Suchomel and Marcela Suchomelová (Prague: National Gallery in Prague, 2002), 28.
- 46 Vos, "Dejima und die Handelsbeziehungen," 76–7.
- 47 Jörg, "Japanese Lacquerwork Decorated After European Prints," 64. For illustrations of the coats of arms of European individuals, towns, or countries, see Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 45, figs. 35–40, and 47, fig. 43.
- 48 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 48. On Titsingh's biography, see Timon Screech, *Secret Memoirs of the Shoguns: Isaac Titsingh and Japan, 1779–1822*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 1–74. The evidence on van Reede is perhaps the weakest. He mentions lacquer only once, in a letter to his father in 1793, saying that he would send two oval portrait placards to be kept in safe custody: quoted in Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 48.
- 49 Quoted from Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 53, where Japanese lacquer specialist Yoshimura Motoo is quoted in turn. Schweizer was not able to consult the original diary to establish the precise date of the entry.
- 50 Lothar Ledderose and Doris Croissant, eds., *Japan und Europa 1543–1929* (Berlin: Argon Verlag and Berliner Festspiele, 1993), 343, no. 8/10, fig. 290; and Hidaka Kaori, "Umi o watatta Nihon shikki II," 51.
- 51 See Hidaka Kaori, "Umi o watatta Nihon shikki II," 54, fig. 71(a, b).
- 52 Several suggestions for reading of the name Sasaya have been made: written with the characters 笹屋, Sasaya could be the name of a lacquer workshop or—less probably—the business name of a merchant acting as a middle man between the Dutch and the lacquerers. See Hidaka Kaori, "Umi o watatta Nihon shikki II," 55, 62–3, there quoting Yoshimura Motoo and Oka Yasutada. Also see Filip Suchomel, "The Exportation of Japanese Lacquerware to Europe," 28.
- 53 Screech, *Lens within the Heart*, 98. The term "zograscope" was introduced in the nineteenth century.
- 54 Screech, *Lens within the Heart*, 99.
- 55 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 52–3.
- 56 See Screech, *Lens within the Heart*, in particular 94–132.
- 57 Jörg, "Japanese Lacquerwork Decorated After European Prints," 66; and Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 53. As the design of a print became inverted in the viewing machine, optical prints were intentionally printed in reverse.
- 58 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 217.
- 59 See Dean et al., *Japanese Lacquer Nambokucho to Zeshin*, 189–90, no. 71.
- 60 Dean et al., *Japanese Lacquer Nambokucho to Zeshin*, 190. Cf. Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 71 n. 160.
- 61 The accuracy of the information is doubted in Dean et al., *Japanese Lacquer Nambokucho to Zeshin*, 190; and by Christiaan J. A. Jörg (personal correspon-

- dence). We would also like to thank Mrs. Cynthia Viallé for her kind suggestions.
- 62 Leonor Leiria, "The Art of Lacquering: According to the Namban-Jin Written Sources," *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* 3 (2001): 9–26.
- 63 "[...] hua arte [...] que participa da pintura [...] porque hà entres estes officiaes certos q dourão de certa laya a mais prima obra deste genero q há no descuberto pintado com ouro soido moido, varias couzas [...] tão ricamente feita que não há mais, mas de muito custo de que somente os senhores podem uzar, e agente rica": João Rodrigues, *História da Igreja do Japão 1549–1570* [The history of the church of Japan 1549–1570] (Nagasaki and Coimbra: [no publisher], 1570), 146. The English translation from Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2001), 326–7.
- 64 "Darzu was die von Adel die haben köstlich künstlich unnd schöne Scheiden gemacht von einer schönen schwartzen und scheineten Mixtur darunder Perlmutter unnd andere schöne Farben so künstlich und wol gemacht als wäre es von Natur ein einiger Stain also gewachsen": anonymous, *Newe warhafft außführliche Beschreibung der Jüngstabgesandten Japonischen Legation ganzen Raiß, auß Japan biß gegen Rom, u. wiederumb von dannen in Portugal, biß zu ihrem Abschied auß Lißbona...* (Dillingen: Johannes Mayer, 1587), 108–9. Unless otherwise stated, the translations that follow are by the authors of the present article.
- 65 "Auedans tout éclate de ce reluisant betume mêlé de diverses couleurs, que les Portugais appellent ciara, et les gravures où il est requis, proprement dorées, recréent les yeux, comme les parfums et mixtions odorantes les narines": Matthieu [Matteo] Ricci and Nicolas Trigault, *Histoire de l'Expédition Chrétienne au Royaume de la Chine 1582–1610*, ed. Georges Bessiere, first published 1617 (Bellarmine: Desclee de Brouwer, 1978), 147–8.
- 66 "[...] waer meê de Chineesen haere Draegh-stoelen en Huysraed, jae gantsche Huysen en Scheepen bestrijcken, soo datse daer door een glantsch keijgen als die van de Spiegels is, tot een groote verlustigingh voor 't gesicht. Hier van daen koomd het oock, dat de Wooningen der Chineesen en Japonnesen soo-dae-nigh blincken, datse d'aenschouwers schijnen als toe te laghen": Simon De Vries, *Curieuse Aenmerckingen der bysondertse Oost en West-Indische Verwonderens-waerdige Dingen; Nevens die van China, Africa...* [Curious commentaries on remarkable things especially from the East and West Indies; also some from China, Africa ...] (Utrecht: Johannes Ribbuis, 1682), 27.
- 67 Folker E Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China: Die Entdeckung Ostasiens im Mittelalter*, (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke Verlag, 1992), in particular 87–90.
- 68 Polo probably traveled to Central Asia and parts of China between 1271 and 1295. The account of his travel memories had been reissued in 1554 in a popular collection of ancient and contemporary travel accounts by Giovanni Battista Ramusio. There one reads: "Hanno oro in grandissima abbondanza [...] v'ha un gran palagio tutto coperto di piastre d'oro, secondo che noi copriamo le case o vero chiese di piombo, e tutti i sopracieli delle sale e di molte camere sono di tavolette di puro oro molto grosse, e così le finestre sono ornate d'oro. Questo palagio è così ricco che niuno potrebbe giamai esplicare la valuta di quello." Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi* [Voyages and travels], ed. M. Milanese, 6 vols., first issue 1554 (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1976), 3:252.
- 69 John Stalker and George Parker, *A Treatise of Japaning and Varnishing. Being a compleat Discovery of those Arts...* (London: John Stalker and George Parker, 1688), last page of the unpaginated introduction.
- 70 "Lacciren oder Lackiren heisset, die hölzernen Gefäße und Mobilien, als Tische, Stühle, Gueridons, Schreib-Contoirs, Schräncke, Schüsseln, Schachteln, der Gestalt mit Farben künstlich bemahlen, und alsdenn mit einem saubern Firniß überzühen, daß man es für Marmor oder Ost-Indische Arbeit, oder als wenn es mit Glas überzogen wäre, ansehen sollte": *Grosses vollständiges Universallexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste, welche bishero...*, ed. Johann Heinrich Zedler, 64 vols. (Leipzig, 1737); unaltered facsimile reprint (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1961), vol. 16, 40, entry "Lacciren."
- 71 "[...] einen schimmernden Glanz haben, und die Lichtstrahlen, wie ein Stück Krystall, zurückwerfen und brechen": [Jean-Felix] Watin, *Der Staffirmaler, oder die Kunst anzustreichen, zu vergolden und zu lackiren, wie solche bey Gebäuden, Meublen, Galanterie-waaren, Kutschen...*, first published in 1772 in French as *L'Art du Peintre, Doreur, Vernisseur; Ouvrage utile aux Artistes & aux Amateurs...* (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1774), 170.
- 72 "Es ist gegenwärtig in Europa eine bekannte Sache, daß der Chinesische Firniß keine Zusammensetzung verschiedener Materien, sondern ein Gummi oder eine Resine ist, die aus einem gewissen Baume schwitzt, den die Chineser Tsi-chu, das ist, den Fernißeibaum, nennen": untitled appendix to Watin, *Der Staffirmaler*, 302.
- 73 "Ich lasse die Hoffnung noch nicht fahren, daß man mit der Zeit nicht einen Firniß in Frankreich ausfindig machen sollte,

um den Chinesischen Lack damit zu überziehen. Alsdenn könnten wir den Japanern den Rang streitig machen, ja sie sogar noch übertreffen, da unsre Zeichnung weit feiner und richtiger ist, als der Japaner ihre": Watin, *Der Staffirmaler*, 322–3.

- 74 Stalker and Parker, *A Treatise of Japaning and Varnishing*, unpaginated introduction.
- 75 On the implications of the tableau versus the Japanese folding screen format, see Jacqueline Berndt, "Kunsthistorisch entfaltet: Japanische Stellschirme als, Tableau," in *Visualisierte Körperkonzepte*, ed. Barbara Lange (Berlin: Georg Reimer Verlag, 2006), 49–66.
- 76 Claude Lèvi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 23–4. On this topic see also S. A. Stewart, *On Longing: Narrative of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Towards Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and idem, "Constructing a Small Place," in *Sacred Space: Shrine, City, Land*, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar and R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 18–31.

THE “PALAIS INDIENS” COLLECTION OF 1774

*Representing Mughal Architecture in Late Eighteenth-Century India***Abstract**

Among the works acquired by the French military officer Jean-Baptiste Gentil (1726–99) during his tenure in India was a group of architectural studies known today as the *Palais Indiens* (1774). Painted on hand-fabricated graph paper, these large-format plans and elevations depict monuments from Delhi, Agra, and Faizabad, and are some of the first European-commissioned representations of Indian architecture. This essay argues that in the *Palais Indiens*, architecture functions as a category of historical inquiry and is used to forge connections between the Mughal past and the changing sociopolitical landscape of eighteenth-century India. It also demonstrates that the creators of the collection developed a new, heterogeneous visual language for the description of architecture, drawing on French and Indian representational conventions. The essay concludes by situating the *Palais Indiens* and Gentil in relation to later traditions of architectural representation in India, as well as to later collecting trends in Awadh.

IN 1778 THE FRENCH ARMY OFFICER and political operative Jean-Baptiste Gentil (1726–99) appeared at the court of Louis XVI at Versailles. Recently returned from India, where he had served the French East India Company (Compagnie des Indes Orientales, or CDIO) for twenty-six years, Gentil presented the court with a sizable collection of paintings, albums, and manuscripts, all amassed during his tenure on the subcontinent. Among these was the *Palais Indiens*, a group of architectural plans and elevations representing palaces, forts, mosques, and mausolea in Delhi, Agra, and Faizabad. The collection highlights a noteworthy period of French scholarly and cultural activity in India, which has been eclipsed by the later British dominance of the subcontinent.¹ Considering the French presence complicates the narrative of cross-cultural encounter in India, which has focused on British artists, intellectuals, and patrons. In the decades following the *Palais Indiens* commission, interest in depicting Indian architecture would intensify under the patronage of the British, seen for instance in the landscapes of William Hodges and Thomas and William Daniell in the 1780s and 1790s, and the Company School paintings of the early 1800s.² One of the earliest European-commissioned depictions of Indian architecture, the *Palais Indiens* collection was distinct from these later and better-known works in conception, execution, and audience.

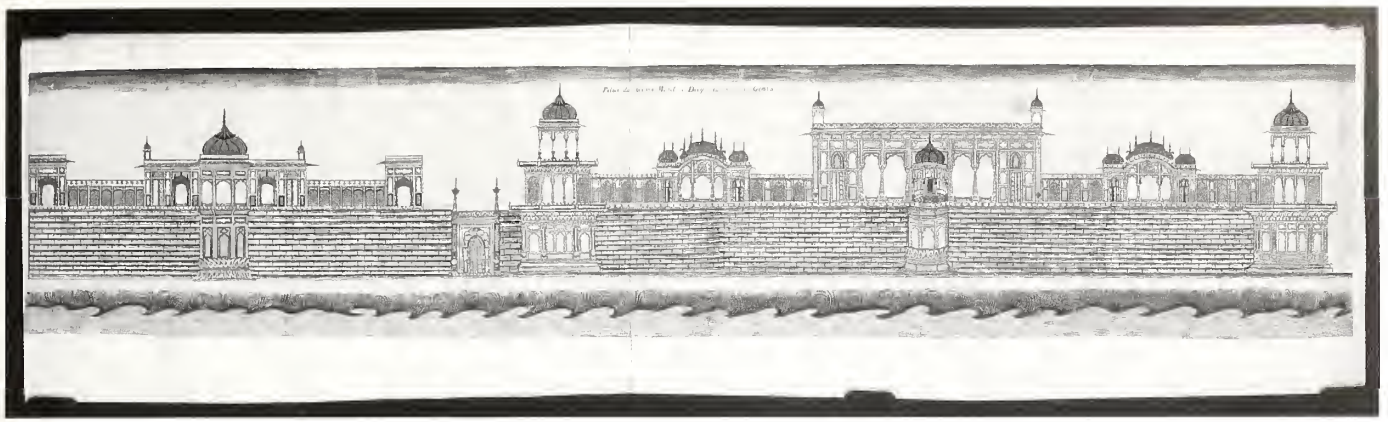
Commissioned by a Frenchman, executed by an Indian artist or artists, and taking as its subject architectural monuments from north India, the *Palais Indiens* exemplifies the rich complexities surrounding global image circulation in the late eighteenth century. The present article aims to explore two interrelated points concerning these architectural studies. First, the *Palais Indiens* posits the architec-

tural monument as an object of historical inquiry; this is especially evident when the commission is analyzed in conjunction with the rest of Gentil's rich and wide-ranging collection, with its emphasis on historical works. The visually distinctive, unified representational system developed in the studies serves to canonize the Mughal architectural past, and is manipulated to suggest continuities between historical icons of Mughal architecture and the buildings of Awadh, the region of northeastern India that grew from a dependency of the Mughal empire into a semi-autonomous state over the course of the eighteenth century. During this period the Mughal dynasty, which controlled most of north India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, began to cede political, economic, and military power to regional states and European trading companies, particularly the French and English East India companies. At the same time, symbols of Mughal authority retained currency and occupied a central role as Indian and European powers alike vied for dominance in India.³ In connecting the monuments of the Mughal emperors and the Awadhi nawabs, the *Palais Indiens* collection embodies the contestations over the Mughals' legacy that defined the political and social landscape of the time. Considering the paintings in conjunction with Gentil's broader collection allows us to examine the ways in which he was personally subject to these cultural currents, and how they affected his self-representation.

The second point concerns the visual language resulting from the encounter between Gentil and the artists in his employ. Drawing on Indian and French representational systems, the artists of these paintings developed a new, heterogeneous visual language for the description of architecture. Gentil's role as patron was partly responsible for this fusing of Indian and European visual idioms, as he likely provided some of the models for these works in the form of plans and elevations executed by military engineers working for the CDIO. At the same time, the artists incorporated conventions of architectural representation then prevalent in north India. Suggesting an openness to the integration of these myriad techniques, the encounter evident in the *Palais Indiens* thus involved not only the adoption but also the transformation of multiple visual languages.

Representing Architecture, Writing History

The *Palais Indiens* consists of plans and elevations of palaces, forts, mosques, mausolea, and garden complexes in Delhi, Agra, and Faizabad. The majority of this collection (twenty-four folios) is housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. In addition, three folios in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, were most likely part of the original group.⁴ A substantial portion of the group focuses on major monuments in Delhi: three studies are dedicated to the city's Jami' Masjid, three to its Red Fort, and one to the mausoleum of Safdar Jang (r. 1737–53, d. 1754),



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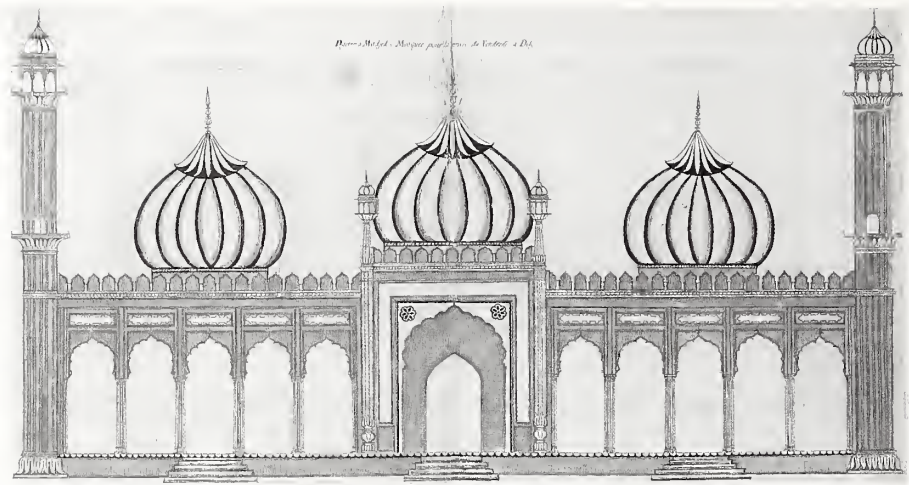
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Riverside facade of the Red Fort of Delhi, India, ca. 1774. Watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Od. 63, fol. 3. Photograph BnF

who had served as prime vizier of the Mughal empire as well as the nawab of Awadh. In addition, the collection contains seven renderings of Delhi palaces and one of the city's Tripolia Gate. Beside the Delhi paintings, the *Palais Indiens* includes representations of the mansions and gardens of the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh (d. 1659) in Agra. Finally, the collection also depicts four structures in the Awadhi capital of Faizabad, including the palace of Shuja' al-Daula (r. 1753–75), who was the reigning nawab during Gentil's residence in Awadh, and the son of and successor to Safdar Jang. The *Palais Indiens* thus crosses temporal and geographical boundaries to connect Mughal historical icons with the architecture of Awadh. The inclusion of Safdar Jang's tomb is particularly telling, as it highlights a major Awadhi contribution to the canon of Mughal architecture in the Mughal capital city of Delhi.

Although the *Palais Indiens* has been briefly discussed by other scholars, it has not been the subject of sustained analysis.⁵ As a result, basic yet critical questions regarding the scope of the collection have not adequately been addressed. Nor have prior analyses properly accounted for the unique format and monumental scale of these studies, and more importantly, the implications of the size and format for viewing the works. Most of the paintings range from approximately half a meter to one meter in width and roughly two meters in length. Though the *Palais Indiens* is always referred to and catalogued as an album, the original paintings were executed as individual large-scale scrolls, requiring a viewer to unroll each of them individually. (They were bound in the early nineteenth century, and then subsequently unbound for conservation purposes.)⁶ Thus the viewer experienced the architectural studies on a monumental scale. Such a format suggests a limited audience for these paintings, in contrast, for instance, to the aquatints that would later be produced by the Daniells in the late 1790s and early 1800s.

Executed on hand-fabricated graph paper, the paintings follow a consistent format, with a large-scale elevation or plan accompanied by an inscription providing information such as the building's owner, location, and construction materials (Fig. 1). A standardized color palette further unifies the paintings: in all but one instance, the elevations use red for the main structure, with accents in gold, green, yellow, and black, while the plans are articulated in a similar palette of red and green. Buildings are never shown in use, and the paintings feature no people at all. Moreover, landscape is also absent in most of the images, and when it does appear, is kept to a bare minimum: simple strips of blue, grey, green, and yellow signify sky, water, and riverbeds, stylized swirls indicate clouds, and abstract plant forms rep-



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Jami' Masjid of Delhi, India, ca. 1774. Watercolor and ink on paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Od. 63, fol. 12. Photograph BnF

3
Gateway of the Red Fort of Delhi, India, ca. 1774. Watercolor and ink on paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Od. 63, fol. 14. Photograph BnF

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Mausoleum of Safdar Jang, India, ca. 1774. Watercolor and ink on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, AL 3858. Courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2010 – photograph by the author

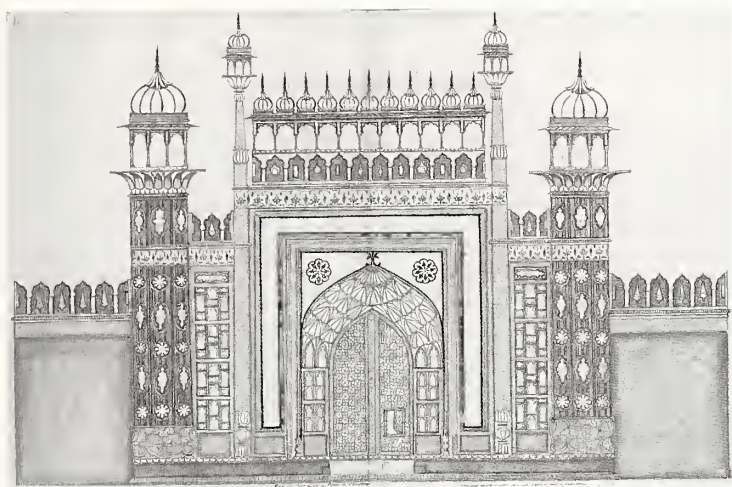
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Facade of a Delhi Palace, India, ca. 1774. Watercolor and ink on paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Od. 63, fol. 13. Photograph BnF

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Plan of the Jami' Masjid of Delhi, India, ca. 1774. Large-format plan divided into two folios. Watercolor and ink on paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Od. 63, fols. 8–9. Photograph BnF

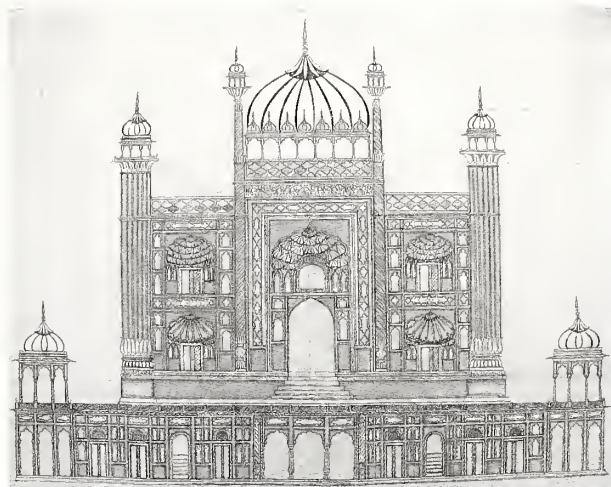
resent vegetation or garden plots. A sense of flatness pervades the elevations, and the few plans included in the collection are relatively spare. It is not known if Gentil or the collection's artists were responsible for the inscriptions, but stylistically these appear to have been included when the images were first painted. The inclusion of explanatory labels and texts was also characteristic of the illustrated works commissioned by Gentil (see p. 183).

In developing the pictorial vocabulary of the *Palais Indiens*, the artists drew on and manipulated elements of Mughal architecture to produce images that emerge as variations on a type, rather than as singular, individualized depictions. For instance, the trademark Mughal building materials of red sandstone, white marble, and gold and copper sheathing inform the red, white, and gold palette of the paintings, while the architectonic and ornamental elements of the compositions are characteristic of Mughal architecture: cusped arches, baluster columns, bulbous domes, bangla roofs and cornices, shallow chhatri domes, jali screens, pishtaq entranceways, muqarnas vaulting, and pietre dure mosaic work. Having developed this fixed set of formal features, the artists reproduce them in varying patterns to produce the different elevations. The domes of the Jami' Masjid in Delhi (built 1650–56; Fig. 2), for example, are seen in miniature in the chhatris of the gateway of the Delhi Red Fort (built 1639–48; Fig. 3); the floral frieze of the gateway, in turn, is repeated in the mausoleum of Safdar Jang (built ca. 1753–4; Fig. 4), also in Delhi; and the domes and chhatri-topped minarets of the Jami' Masjid and mausoleum of Safdar Jang are one and the same. A shared visual vocabulary can be seen particularly in the multiple palace elevations for which the collective group is named. All of these paintings are long, horizontally oriented panoramas of riverside facades, composed of different combinations of the elements identified above.

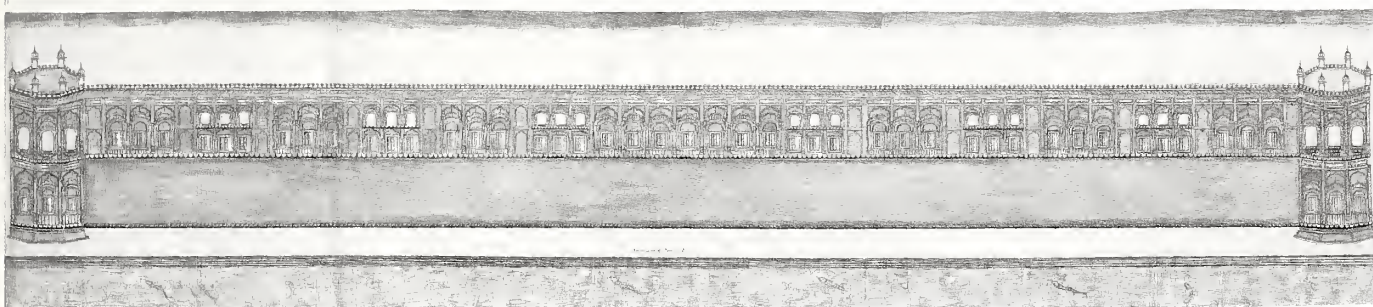
The paintings' repeated and modular architectural morphology is underscored by their articulation on graph paper. In the elevations, architectonic elements such as walls, columns, towers, stringcourses, and cornices correspond to the rows and columns marked on the paper. In the *Facade of a Delhi Palace*, for example, rows of squares are filled in with alternating colors and patterns to render elements such as a plinth, a foundation wall, intermediate stringcourses, friezes, eaves, and a cornice (Fig. 5). The areas between are filled in with single- and double-storey arcades, repeated in regularly alternating patterns to create a unified facade.



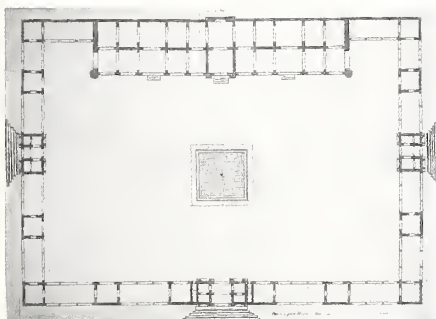
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Like the elevations, the plans rely on units of graph paper to articulate information about the monuments. A set of conventions, including red lines to indicate walls and single green squares for columns, articulate structural units. These elements are then integrated in order to illustrate the overall organization of a building. The plan of the Jamī Masjid in Delhi, for example, employs these conventions to graphically represent a series of monumental gateways and rooms surrounding a central courtyard (Fig. 6). Although this plan is spare, it conveys the defining aspects of the building, such as symmetry and regularity.

This methodical compositional system suggests that the monuments in question have been carefully surveyed and systematically reproduced, rather than invented or imagined. In addition, textual glosses imply that the paintings are based on on-the-spot observation. An inscription along the lower edge of one of the paintings, for instance, states that the structure is built of red stone, inlaid with white and black marble and under domes of white marble (*"pierre rouge incrustée en marbre blanc et noir: la dessus des Dômes en marbre blanc"*). Moreover, the legibility afforded by the paintings' monumental scale means that the viewer can easily comprehend how the paintings are composed and, by extension, how the structures are built.

While such pictorial strategies imply fidelity to an original, closer analysis reveals the ways in which the artists take representational license, not only by reusing standardized architectural elements but also, and most notably, with respect to the depiction of ornament. The artists imbue the buildings with a lavish decorative sensibility. In the painting of the monumental marble and sandstone gateway of



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Gateway of the Red Fort of Delhi, ca.
1638–47. Photograph by the author

the Red Fort, inscribed *Porte du Fort où est le Palais de l'Empéreur* (see Fig. 3), an exquisite ornamental program is rendered with a wealth of detail, including a rich chevron pattern on the engaged minarets, intricate muqarnas netting in the central vault, extensive incised relief on the metal door, a jewel-toned floral frieze running across the pishtaq, carved cartouches running the length of the side towers, and, at the capital and base of these towers, floral motifs and vegetal scrolls that virtually curl off the page. While striking, the sensuous decoration is curious given that many of these ornamental features are absent from the actual gateway, a relatively austere building featuring a continuous sandstone facade with limited panels of ornamental relief (Fig. 7).

In fact, elements from at least two other Mughal-era monuments—the gateway of the Taj Mahal (Agra, built ca. 1647; Fig. 8) and the tomb of Safdar Jang (Fig. 9)—appear in the painting. The profile and proportions of the painted building, as well as the inclusion of ornamental motifs such as floral *pietre dure*, strongly recall the Taj Mahal gateway without precisely replicating the full architectural and ornamental program of that building. For instance, the elaborate *pietre dure* work is not reproduced in the spandrels of the central arch, but rather in horizontal friezes. The building's inscription and the stacked, pointed side arches of its facade do not appear in the painting at all. Close examination of the side towers in the painting reveals that, while they are visually distinct from those of the Taj Mahal gateway, they closely resemble the side towers of the tomb of Safdar Jang, with their alternating panels of quatrefoils and cartouches (Fig. 10). The amalgamation of these forms exemplifies the inventiveness and license that marks the *Palais Indiens*, as well as demonstrating its interest in the depiction of ornament.

This use of lavish ornament as a key descriptive feature is significant. The architectural idiom expressed in the *Palais Indiens* is exemplified in the mausoleum of Safdar Jang, which was based on Mughal sepulchral prototypes but featured the ornamental aesthetic that would come to define the architecture of Awadh in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its surfaces are replete with lavish floral and geometric designs that are recalled in the ornate compositions in the *Palais Indiens* (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12). A key example of later Awadhi architecture that features a similar sensibility is the Bara Imambara complex of Asaf al-Daula (built ca. 1784–91), the monumental congregational space used by Shi'is particularly during



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Gateway of the Taj Mahal, Agra, ca. 1647. Photograph by the author



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Mausoleum of Safdar Jang, Delhi, ca. 1753–4. Photograph by the author



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Side tower, Mausoleum of Safdar Jang, Delhi, ca. 1753–4. Photograph by the author

the month of Muharram, and sponsored by Shuja' al-Daula's son and successor. The deployment of an ornate ornamental program in this structure represents the persistence and further development of the idiom (Fig. 13). In the buildings of the Bara Imambara complex, interior and exterior spaces are richly animated with an array of curvilinear shapes, floral motifs, and complex geometric patterns, demonstrating how the ornamental forms articulated in the *Palais Indiens* were integral to the ongoing development and expression of an Awadhi architectural identity.⁷

Besides exhibiting an ornamental aesthetic associated with Awadh, the *Palais Indiens* represents Mughal and Awadhi architectural monuments alongside each other. In describing them, the artists concentrate on developing a consistent visual vocabulary and systematic method for the representation of architecture. What emerges is a coherent canon of built forms, unified in style and palette. But the *Palais Indiens* paintings “effect,” rather than “reflect” reality, curiously implying methodical, on-the-spot observation of buildings while actually offering subjective portrayals that draw on a heavily ornamental aesthetic. Whether or not this balance between the observed and the imagined is maintained consciously, the visual continuities developed in the collection ultimately suggest historical continuities. The Mughal architectural icons function as the symbolic foundation of an image of Awadhi sovereignty.

The inclination to connect a chronologically, geographically, and stylistically disparate group of architectural monuments encapsulates the cultural and power dynamics of late eighteenth-century Mughal India. The contestation over the appropriation of Mughal architectural codes and symbolic practices was keenly felt during this period, as regional successor states and early European colonial powers sought to solidify their legitimacy and authority in the subcontinent. The historicization of architecture evident in the *Palais Indiens* is all the more meaningful given these shifts in the balance of power. The *Palais Indiens* demonstrates how architecture occupied a central position in these negotiations and allowed various parties to connect to the historical legacy represented by certain Mughal buildings. The collection of images in Gentil's album suggests that the historical legacy of Mughal Delhi, and in particular its architectural signs of political and cultural power, remained relevant in the Awadhi historical imagination. At the same time, a contemporary, newly developing Awadhi aesthetic is imposed on the icons of the



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Detail of vault, Mausoleum of Safdar
Jang, Delhi, ca. 1753–4. Photograph
by the author



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Detail of Fig. 4.

Mughal past, visually eliding past and present. For Awadh, associating with such a strong cultural history was meaningful for political reasons. For Gentil, as I will discuss below, the commission was one example amongst many which demonstrated his professional and personal investment in contemporary Awadhi politics and the production of north Indian historical narratives.

Collecting Authority

Gentil's patronage and collecting activities evidenced connections to other Europeans working in India in the eighteenth century. He was an associate of Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), the famed French scholar who had lived and worked in India from 1754 until 1762 and was renowned for his translation of the Zoroastrian *Zend Avesta*. After Anquetil-Duperron's return to France, when he began publishing his histories and translations of Persian and Sanskrit texts, Gentil regularly corresponded with and sourced manuscripts for him.⁸ Anquetil-Duperron represents not only Gentil's connection to a broader community of French scholars and collectors, but also to contemporary and later British epistemological endeavors. Anquetil-Duperron was a correspondent and colleague of the English philologist William Jones, who founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784 and is credited with the discovery of linkages between Indo-European languages. One of Jones's most prominent supporters was Warren Hastings, the governor-general of British territories in India from 1774 to 1785 and an active patron of British artists and intellectuals in India.

Gentil's commissions and his own writing stand out not only for their relatively early date, but also because they demonstrate how personally involved he was in the production of historical narratives. Documenting and connecting to a Mughal historical legacy became a matter of urgency and fell into the purview of both his personal writings and commissioned works, including the *Palais Indiens*. These contributed to Gentil's broader endeavor of acquiring authority on and over India. Despite the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the French still maintained an interest in India and were concerned with thwarting British expansion. The British insistence on the expulsion of all French citizens from Awadh in 1775, and their ongoing suspicion of Gentil, also testified to a British concern with alliances between regional rulers and French governmental representatives.



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Detail of the Bara Imambara of Asaf
al-Daula, Lucknow, ca. 1784–91.
Photograph by the author

It was only by embedding himself in Awadhi society that Gentil could gain access to privileged information necessary for his work as a French political operative. In a dispatch to his superiors, written in Faizabad in January 1773, Gentil asserts his ability to provide reliable and thorough intelligence about India. He insists that the position in which he finds himself could be useful in allowing him to report on current events in India, and provides a lengthy and detailed account of the political situation on the ground.⁹ The repeated use of the word *témoignages*, which invokes observation, testimony, evidence, and accounting, emphasizes how important it was for Gentil to establish himself as a credible reporter, firmly in a position to relay accurate information.

Although the Gentil collection comprised texts on law, religion, lexicography, poetry, calligraphy, and numismatics, and included Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic manuscripts, the majority of Gentil's own writing related to Mughal and Awadhi history.¹⁰ This interest is best exemplified by his illustrated works, which included an atlas of the Mughal empire (*Empire Mogol divisé en 21 soubahs ou gouvernements tiré de différens écrivains du pais en Faisabad en MDCCLXX*, 1770); a history of the Mughal emperors (*Abrégé historique des Souverains de l'Indoustan ou Empire Mogol*, 1772); and the so-called Gentil Album, a multi-part album illustrating events and figures from the Mughal and Awadhi courts and featuring proto-ethnographic views of Hindu and Muslim religious festivals and figures (*Recueil de toutes sortes de dessins sur les Usages et coutumes des Peuples de l'Indoustan ou Empire Mogol*, 1774).¹¹

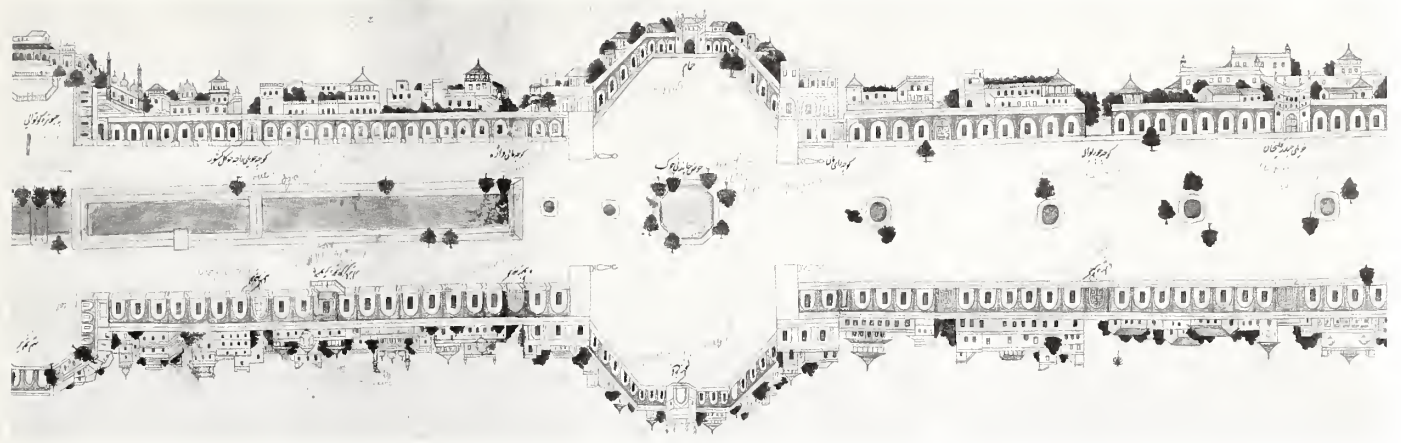
Rather than merely recounting Indian history as a series of distantly observed events, Gentil uses visual and textual narratives to present it as an ongoing process in which he actively participates. In 1764 Shuja' al-Daula entrusted Gentil with the task of brokering a peace settlement with the English after the defeat of allied Mughal and Awadhi forces at Baksar.¹² The meeting during which the treaty was

ratified is depicted in the “Gentil Album,” complete with an illustration of Gentil himself. In addition, Gentil boasts of the praise and recognition Shuja’ al-Daula bestowed upon him after he procured agreeable terms for negotiation:

This prince, pleased with the opening of this negotiation and wanting to place me in the position of negotiating as an equal with the two Indian lords, who were at the head of the English, bestowed upon me all the titles that an Indian grandee can possess, calling me *Rafioudoulah*, *Nazemdjenk*, *Bahadour*, *Tadbir-oul-Moulouk*.¹³

Here Gentil emphasizes that the crucial role he played in these negotiations earned him the Persian titles “Uplifter of the State,” “Leader in War,” “the Valiant,” and “Counsel of Kings.” His ability to act as a broker with the English translated into a capacity to earn the respect usually accorded to “Indian lords” (*seigneurs Indiens*). That Gentil adopted his Persianate titles fully is indicated by the seal bearing them found on many of his manuscripts. He also bestowed lavish praise on the nawab in his memoirs, describing him as “a prince gifted with a superior genius” (*prince doué d’un génie supérieur*) and the “best friend of the French in these distant lands” (*le meilleur ami des Français dans ces contrées lointaines*).¹⁴ These statements invoke his intimate acquaintance with Shuja’ al-Daula and in so doing remind the reader how deeply Gentil was involved in affairs of state.

Gentil claimed another connection to Indian history through his marriage to Thérèse Velho, an Indo-Portuguese woman with ties to the Mughal court. In one of his historical accounts Gentil asserts that Velho’s grandmother Juliana, a native of Goa, had been entrusted with the education of the Mughal prince Shah ‘Alam I (later the emperor Bahadur Shah I, r. 1707–12) and later provided him with political counsel, thus occupying a prominent position in Mughal government.¹⁵ So valuable was her advice, Gentil reports, that Bahadur Shah I awarded Juliana gifts equal to 900,000 rupees, four villages producing 50,000 rupees in annual revenue, and the Palace of Dara Shikoh.¹⁶ This extraordinary account of Juliana’s role in Mughal history concludes by quoting Bahadur Shah I as saying, “if this woman were a man, I would make her vizier” (*si cette femme étois homme, je la ferois Vizir*). (Gentil goes on to recount that Juliana’s descendants fled Delhi during an attack by Ahmad Shah Abdali, seeking refuge at the court of Shuja’ al-Daula in Faizabad, where they were welcomed and offered a pension. Subsequently, Gentil met and married Thérèse Velho in Faizabad.) Gentil also emphasizes Juliana in his memoirs, which contain a chapter devoted to “Renowned Women of India”: alongside sovereigns and leaders such as Razia, Nur Jahan, Jahanara, and Begum Sumru, Gentil tells the tale of Juliana.¹⁷ By including narratives of Juliana in his historical



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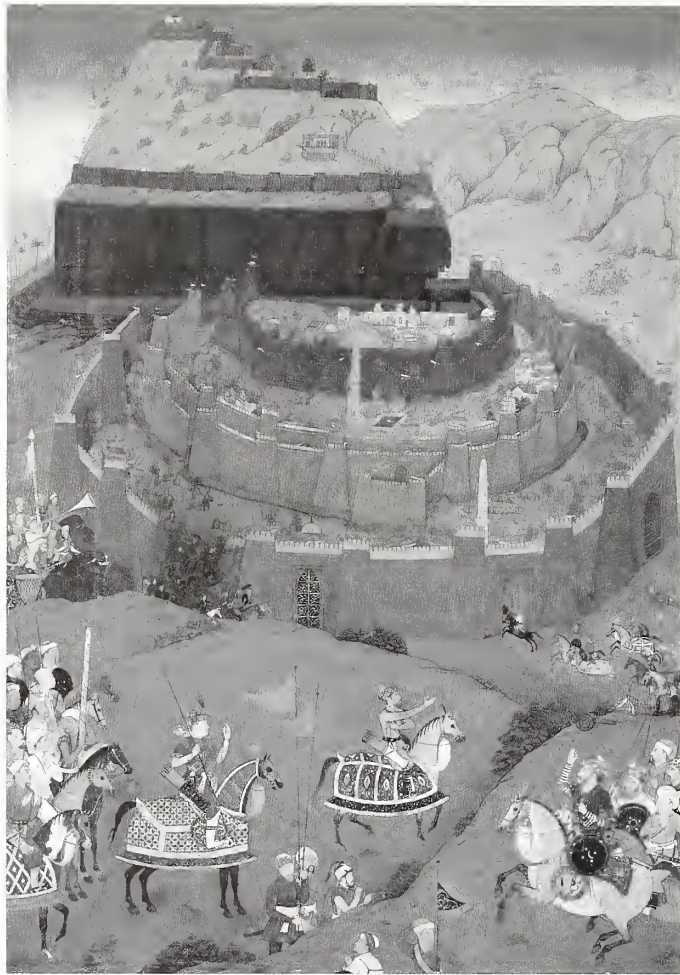
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Street plan of Chandni Chowk in Delhi (detail), mid- to late 18th century. Watercolor and ink on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, AL 1762. Photograph © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London

works, Gentil consciously integrates his wife, through her lineage, into Mughal history, and by extension, inserts himself into that history. This personal connection might also account for the plans and elevations of Dara Shikoh's Agra palace and the palace of Safdar Jang in Delhi, formerly Dara Shikoh's Delhi residence, in the *Palais Indiens*.

In considering Gentil's *Palais Indiens* commission, it is tempting to cast him as an outsider attempting to capture the unfamiliar. As demonstrated above, however, the space that Gentil occupied at the Awadhi court was complex and layered. Through his commissions, he attempted to offer French audiences the mechanisms to encounter Indian history, architecture, and cultural practices, assigning himself the role of mediator between France and India. That Gentil actually translated many historical works (with the help of *munshis*, or "scholar-scribes") and provided first-person accounts of historical events in his memoirs and other writings makes clear the active part he played in the conceptualization and execution of his commissions, and how integral they were to his self-representation.

The importance accorded to architectural representation in this project of mediation is evident not only in the *Palais Indiens*, but also in a series of city plans of Shahjahanabad (Mughal Delhi) now in the V&A.¹⁸ A group of large, minutely detailed, extensively labeled watercolors combine to form a monumental plan of the Red Fort and the two main avenues leading away from it, Chandni Chowk and Faiz Bazaar (Fig. 14). Multilingual textual glosses, in Persian and French, provide the names of mosques, bathhouses, squares, and mansions (*havelis*); the plans also contain survey information in Latin.¹⁹ Evidence suggests that at the very least Gentil acquired, if he did not commission, the plans and was responsible for their transfer to Europe: included in the eighteenth-century catalogue of works acquired by Gentil and cited above (see note 4) is an entry recording 2 *rues de Dely* (Two streets of Delhi). The entry is listed alongside other paintings that eventually entered the V&A collection, such as the *Tombeau de saftardjangué*, and is labeled as entry number ten. Paper analysis I conducted on the street plans reveals that they bear labels with the number ten, which were subsequently covered during mounting.²⁰ Thus the two Delhi street views referred to in the catalogue are almost certainly the plans of Chandni Chowk and Faiz Bazaar kept in the V&A today.²¹ Like the *Palais Indiens*, these renderings concentrate on architecture as a primary focus of representation and object of historical interest.



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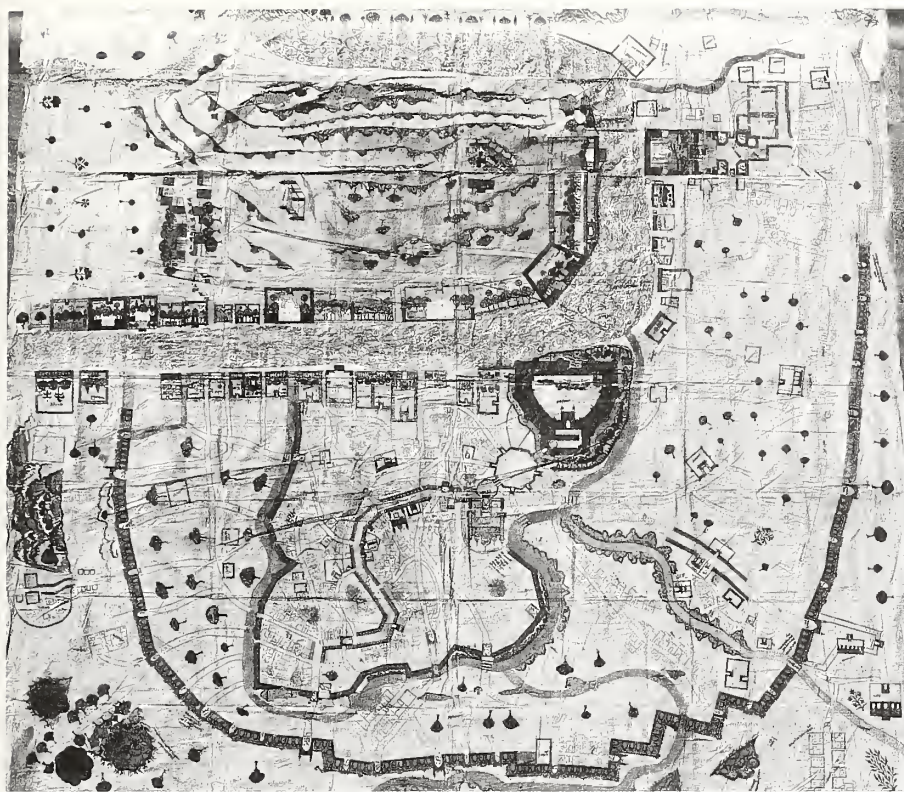
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Murar, *The Siege of Daulatabad*, from the *Pādshāhnāma*, ca. 1635. Opaque pigment and gold on paper. The Royal Collection, RCIN 1005025, fol. 144r. Photograph The Royal Collection © 2009, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

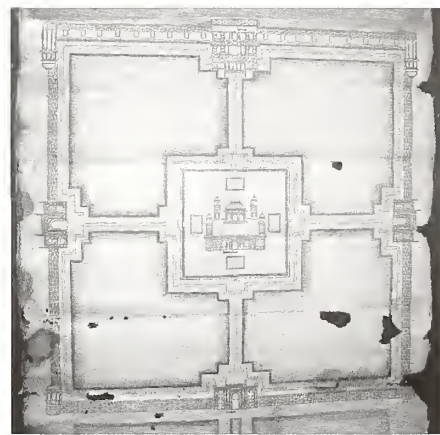
Visual Heterogeneity in the *Palais Indiens*

While the *Palais Indiens* evidences important conceptual connections to Gentil's other commissions, it also echoes eighteenth-century French architectural studies documenting buildings in India that were produced by CDIO military engineers. The practice of producing archival copies of architectural studies and maps was formalized by Louis XVI in 1776, when he ordered visual records of the French colonies to be deposited at Versailles.²² The *Palais Indiens*, too, was deposited at Versailles by Gentil after his return to France in 1778, pointing to its shared function with the French military plans, both serving as records of French expansion and interest in India. In the case of the *Palais Indiens*, however, artists working in Faizabad drew on both Indian and French representational conventions to produce their architectural renderings, suggesting collaboration between Gentil and those in his employ.

Prior to the *Palais Indiens*, architecture seldom served as the primary subject matter in Mughal and Rajput painting (the styles most current in north India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries).²³ Architectural representation did not emerge as a distinct genre in the classical Mughal painting canon of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as did portraiture and studies of flora and fauna.²⁴ When architecture appeared in manuscript and single-page painting, it often functioned as pictorial background, providing a generic setting for courtly scenes or lending



16
Map of Agra, after 1722. Pigment on cloth. Jaipur City Palace Museum, Jaipur. Photograph courtesy Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Trust, The City Palace, Jaipur



17
Plan of the funerary complex of 'Itimad al-Daula, 18th century. Watercolor and ink on paper. Jaipur City Palace Museum, Jaipur. Photograph courtesy Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Trust, The City Palace, Jaipur

geographical specificity to historical ones. A 1633 painting from the *Pādshāhnāma*, the imperial chronicle of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1627–58),²⁵ features a sizable rendering of the Daulatabad fortress, in south India, during a siege (Fig. 15),²⁶ but the architectural monument is not the sole focus of the painting. Moreover, architectural representation is linked to textual narrative. In the seventeenth-century Mughal context, architectural rendering did not function on its own, but instead required an accompanying textual description for full elucidation.

There are, however, more examples of architectural representations in city plans and topographical paintings from the eighteenth century. In a map of Agra from after 1722, now in the Jaipur City Palace Museum, a series of garden plots along the Yamuna River are represented in plan, while individual buildings within these zones are rendered in elevation (Fig. 16). Emphasizing structures in the city that required repair, and containing extensive notes on building and area measurements, the map serves as a renovation and construction aid.²⁷ An eighteenth-century plan of the tomb and garden of 'Itimad al-Daula in Agra from the same collection, also conceived as a multiperspectival painting, contains elevations of the complex's central structure (Fig. 17).²⁸ These images suggest possible conventions for representing elevations being developed through topographical paintings and site plans.

If illustrations of architecture *per se* are not found in seventeenth-century Mughal and Rajput visual culture, there is evidence of a tradition of gridded plans for practical use, a tradition which the *Palais Indiens* adopts and transforms. Such plans were widespread in the post-Timurid eastern Islamic world, with Ottoman, Iranian, and Central Asian examples dating from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries extant today.²⁹ Although there are no surviving Mughal plans, there is pictorial

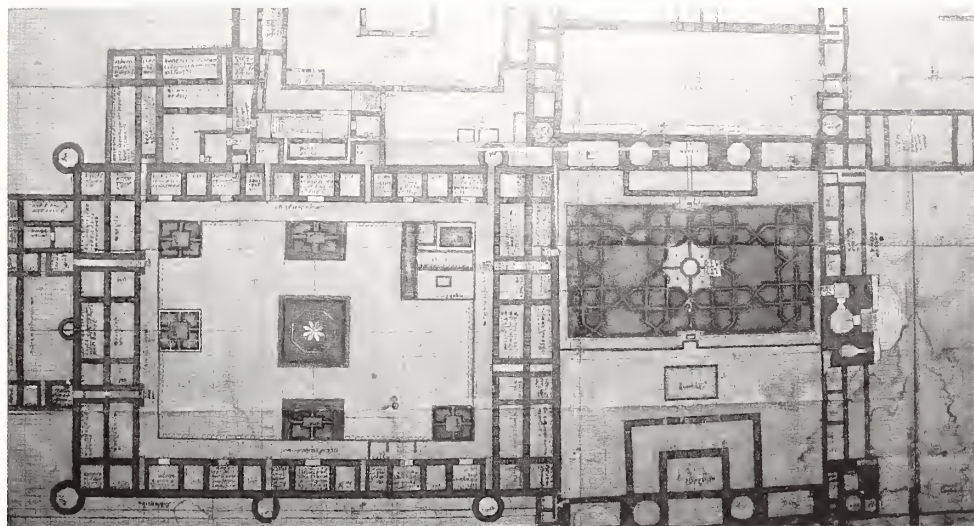


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Scene of a garden being constructed, with a supervisor holding a gridded plan, from a *Baburnāma*, ca. 1580. Opaque pigment on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IM 1913-276. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

and textual evidence for a history of drawn architectural plans in Mughal India, where standardized modular planning governed architectural design.³⁰ Indeed, the use of gridded plans had become a well-established aspect of architectural practice in Mughal India by the time the *Palais Indiens* was painted, and cannot necessarily be explained by the influence of Europeans as has sometimes been assumed.³¹ A well-known manuscript painting from the *Baburnāma* (ca. 1580), showing a garden being laid out while an overseer holds a gridded plan, attests to this tradition. In the painting, a gardener holding a string across the axis of the garden conveys the correspondence between garden and plan (Fig. 18).³² In addition, Mughal textual sources reference architectural plans (*ṭarḥ*, *ṭarah*, and *naqshā*) in various contexts. The *Pādshāhnāma* and *ʿAmal-i Sālih*, chronicles of the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, report that the emperor ordered plans of buildings he liked, and also approved plans before construction was to begin on his major building projects.³³ On multiple occasions, Shah Jahan's successor Aurangzeb ordered plans of noblemen's houses, and the *Kalimāt-i Tāiyabāt*, a collection of imperial decrees, describes Aurangzeb's consultation of a plan as he prepared to attack a fort in the Deccan.³⁴ Over the course of the seventeenth century, drawing architectural plans grew into a specialized task assigned to chief or master architects (*ustād me'mār*), who were differentiated in rank, responsibility, and pay from engineers and technical supervisors (*muhandis*) and masons (*bannā*).³⁵



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19
Plan of Amber fort, late 17th or early
18th century. Watercolor and ink on
paper. Jaigarh Fort Museum, Jaipur.
Photograph courtesy Maharaja Sawai
Man Singh II Museum Trust, The
City Palace, Jaipur

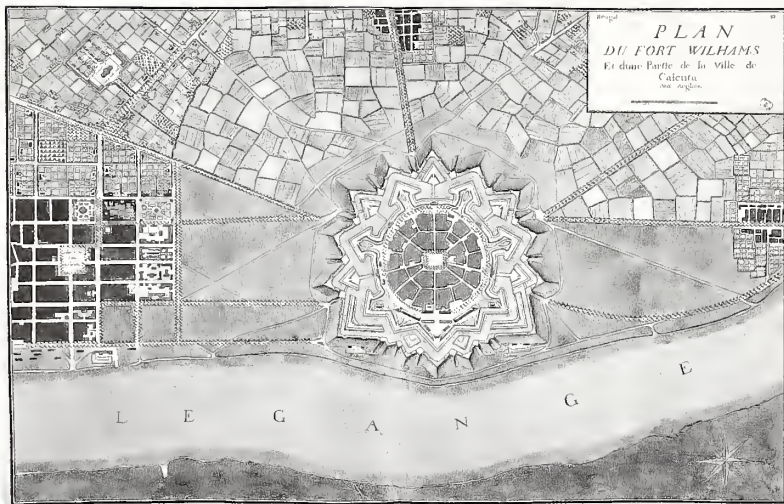
A select group of eighteenth-century building plans from Jaipur collections exhibit striking visual similarity to the *Palais Indiens* plans.³⁶ They are painted on hand-fabricated graph paper, with walls and supports articulated in simple lines of red and green. Despite the stylistic echoes between these two groups of plans, however, they serve dramatically different functions. A plan of the palace at Amber, just outside Jaipur, encapsulates the characteristics of the Rajput plans, which all bear concrete relationships to processes of building construction or renovation (Fig. 19).³⁷ While the *Palais Indiens* plans are economical with detail, the Amber plan contains extensive pictorial and textual information. Individual building features are far more clearly articulated; the layouts of gardens, for example, are rendered as detailed patterns, rather than as stylized green squares. In addition, each of the rooms is labeled either with the name of its occupant or its function, and building renovations are also recorded on the plan. Related examples from Jaipur demonstrate the same detailed and process-oriented approach, serving as progress reports on completed and proposed renovations on the fort of Jaigarh and Man Mandir in Benares. The *Palais Indiens* plans, by contrast, serve as idealized records of built structures. The *Palais Indiens*, then, draws on techniques of architectural representation firmly established in India since at least the seventeenth century, but also signifies a divergence from the earlier tradition, serving a commemorative rather than technical function.

As mentioned above, the *Palais Indiens* paintings also exhibit modes of representation seen in architectural studies prepared by French military engineers working in the subcontinent. Given Gentil's background as a French military officer and governmental representative, it is probable that he had access to such documents or was familiar with their conventions. Surviving pictorial evidence of the CDIO's documentary and mapping activities includes maps, plans, and views of European and Indian cities from the eighteenth century, including the French-founded towns of Pondicherry, Mahé, and Chandernagore; the growing British colonial centers in Calcutta and Madras; the Dutch outposts at Negapatnam, Cochin, and Colombo; and regional Indian capitals and strongholds, such as Tanjore. The largest collection of these is housed in the Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Archives de France, Aix-en-Provence.³⁸ In addition to maps and plans of entire cities, there are also



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Draftsmen at work, from the Boileau Album, Madras, 1785. Watercolor and ink on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 75–1954 [5]. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



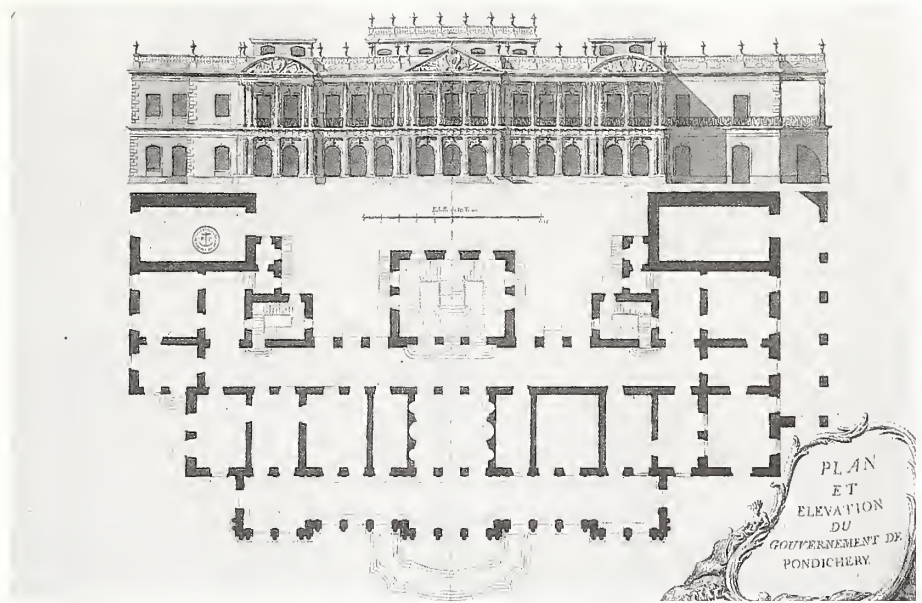
21

21
 Plan of Fort William, Calcutta, ca. 1779. Watercolor and ink on paper. Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, 25 DFC 361 A. Photograph FR.ANOM

architectural studies of major French governmental, commercial, and military buildings: the Governor's Palace and *blanchisserie* in Pondicherry (see Fig. 22), the French magazine at Mahé, and the Loge at Chandernagore. A significant portion of the material is dedicated to documenting the architecture of other European colonial powers, such as the British-built Fort William in Calcutta (see below), and the Indian forts at Daulatabad and Arcot.

This body of material represents a rich deposit of drafting techniques that circulated throughout the Indian subcontinent in the late eighteenth century. That Indian artists were well aware of such techniques is shown in a 1785 painting in the V&A that depicts an Indian draftsman working on a watercolor ground plan of a *trace italienne*, the iconic star-shaped fortification that grew popular in Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century (Fig. 20). In the Indian context, the plan most immediately recalls plans of Fort William included in the CDIO studies (Fig. 21).

A comparison between a pair of paintings from the *Palais Indiens* and a 1755 study of the Governor's Palace in Pondicherry (Fig. 22) is particularly suggestive of such an assimilation of French drafting conventions. Inscribed *Plan et Elevation du Gouvernement de Pondichery*, the French study features a front elevation and ground-floor plan. It is rendered on unlined paper, in contrast to the graph paper used in the *Palais Indiens*. Significant here is the correspondence between plan and elevation. Features such as the projecting central facade and receding, niched wings of the building are clearly delineated in the plan. Similarly, a plan and an elevation of the palace of the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh from the *Palais Indiens* are drawn in correlation to each other (Fig. 23 and Fig. 24). In the elevation, three large, octagonal towers frame two prominent bangla pavilions, with smaller,



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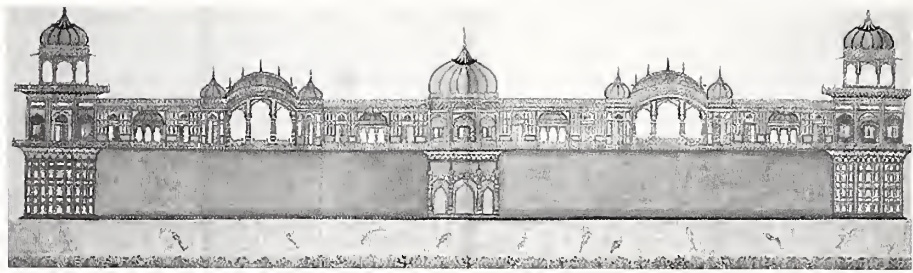
22
Plan and elevation of the Governor's
Palace in Pondicherry, 1755.
Watercolor and ink on paper.
Archives nationales d'outre-mer,
Aix-en-Provence, 26 DFC 81 A.
Photograph FR.ANOM

subsidiary pavilions and chambers interspersed. The plan includes not only the building's major features, such as the three towers, but also every column, doorway, and window of the facade. The pillared towers are indicated by red octagons surrounded by squares, while the columns of the bangla and subsidiary pavilions are articulated as series of green squares. Red-filled squares signify the walls of the intervening rooms. Despite Indian traditions of drawn plans, there are no known examples of correlated plans and elevations earlier than this. Thus, although the *Palais Indiens* plans evidence north Indian representational conventions, and the elevations a level of detailed execution associated with Mughal and Rajput painting, the overall format of a coordinated plan and elevation reflects the conventions of French architectural studies.

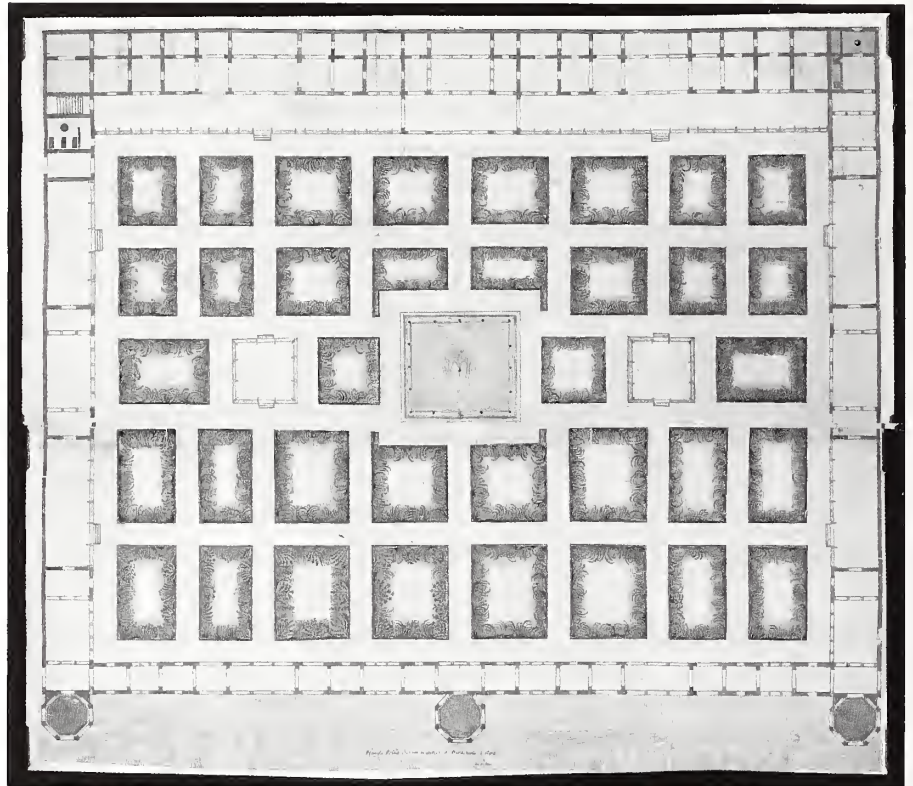
The visual heterogeneity of the *Palais Indiens* also raises questions about artistic agency. Although very little is known about the artists involved in the *Palais Indiens* commission, evidence suggests that at least one artist based in Faizabad executed some of the paintings. Firstly, the studies include an inscription alluding to an architect working for Shuja' al-Daula. It is also known that Gentil employed manuscript painters based in Faizabad for his numerous commissions, and three artists in particular are mentioned in his writings—Mahan Singh, Mihr Chand, and Nevasilal.³⁹ The mastery of Mughal and Rajput painting techniques evident in these studies suggests the hand of an experienced and well-established artist. An amalgamation of Mughal, Rajput, and French painting and drafting techniques would have been well within the practice of artists working at Faizabad, and a collaboration between Gentil and his artists on this commission would have followed the patterns of other examples from his collection, in which Gentil wrote texts illustrated by artists working with him in Faizabad (see p. 183 above).

Conclusions

The *Palais Indiens* was commissioned and executed at a time when Mughal architecture began to be drawn explicitly into historical discourse. Rather than reflecting Gentil's personal taste for the depiction of architecture, the collection points to



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Facade of the palace of Dara Shikoh in Agra, ca. 1774. Watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, AL 1761. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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Plan of the palace and garden of Dara Shikoh in Agra, ca. 1774. Watercolor and ink on paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Od. 63, fols. 17–18. Photograph BnF

a growing historical consciousness about the Mughal cultural legacy and its articulation in the reception and representation of monuments. This preoccupation with representing Indian architecture would intensify in the nineteenth century, particularly as British trade and colonial ambitions increased. Certainly, the Gentil material did not have a direct influence on these subsequent practices; nor did the later traditions constitute a unified category of representation. In landscape paintings by William Hodges and Thomas and William Daniell, architecture was but one compositional component. Their body of paintings exhibited connections with notions of the picturesque developed in Europe, drawing less on Indian representational conventions.⁴⁰ Later Company School paintings, in which architecture grew into a distinct genre of representation, more compellingly echo Gentil's commissions in conception, but are distinctive in execution.⁴¹ The historical contexts and pictorial conventions that came to bear on the *Palais Indiens* represent a specific moment in the history of European depictions of Indian architecture.

Similarly, Gentil's experiences in Awadh anticipated but were distinct from the multicultural collecting community that would grow there over the next sev-

eral decades, particularly in Asaf al-Daula's Lucknow of the late 1770s and 1780s. After the new nawab moved the capital of Awadh to Lucknow in 1775, when British dominion had been established over much of eastern India, a number of English East India Company affiliates settled in Lucknow and contributed to the artistic life of the province. Among these were Antoine Polier, Claude Martin, and Richard Johnson. Franco-Swiss in origin, Polier rose through the ranks of the Company military units until 1766, after which, because of regulations prohibiting foreign officers from ascending beyond the rank of major, he sought employment at the court of Shuja' al-Daula, whose service he entered in 1773 as an engineer and field officer.⁴² Polier was a collector of Indian manuscripts and paintings and his Persian letters reveal sustained correspondence with the artists in his employ.⁴³ Claude Martin, an English East India Company officer who came to Awadh in 1776 as superintendent of the nawabi arsenal, owned a sizable and eclectic collection, including weapons, paintings, manuscripts, and decorative objects from India and Europe.⁴⁴ Richard Johnson, a Company administrator and merchant based in Lucknow between 1780 and 1782, accumulated an extensive collection of paintings, which was sold to the East India Company Library in 1807; it serves as the core of the Indian Miniatures section of the current Asian and African Collections, British Library, London.⁴⁵ These developments both echo and depart from the period of cultural activity in Faizabad largely defined by Gentil, with his French affiliation and his unparalleled intimacy with Shuja' al-Daula and integration into Awadhi court and political life.

The *Palais Indiens* and its related commissions evoke the circulation of images that affected late eighteenth-century India and beyond. Indian and French representational traditions intersect in the album, pointing to the international artistic milieu of Faizabad in the 1770s, and the cultural variety of art objects accessible to artists and patrons. While the paintings ostensibly fulfill a strictly documentary objective, they also embody the historical perceptions and political aspirations of the time and place where they were produced. Even as European colonial powers gained political and economic strength during this period, Mughal cultural authority remained a persistent force, its legacy contested and claimed in artistic projects such as the *Palais Indiens*.

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NOTES

Historical place names are used throughout the following text (Madras rather than Chennai, and so on).

- 1 Though the French presence in India has not been as extensively examined as that of the British, important studies on this topic include Susan Gole, *Maps of Mughal India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998); Jean-Marie Lafont, *Indika: Essays in Indo-French Relations, 1630–1976* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000); and idem, *Chitra: Cities and Monuments of Eighteenth-Century India from French Archives* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001). Sanjay Subrahmanyam discusses French patrons and collectors, with an emphasis on Antoine Polier, in “The Career of Colonel Polier and Late Eighteenth-Century Orientalism,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd ser., 10, no. 1 (April, 2000): 43–60. Lucian Harris briefly comments on the French presence and Gentil’s tenure in Faizabad in his essay, “The Exploration of Nawabi Culture by European Collectors in 18th-Century Lucknow,” in *Lucknow: Then and Now*, ed. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones (Mumbai: J.J. Bhabha for Marg Publications, 2003), 104–17. Muzaffar Alam and Seema Alavi raise the issue of British–French relations in India in their Introduction to *A European Experience of the Mughal Orient: The I’jāz-i Arsalānī (Persian Letters 1773–1779) of Antoine-Louis Henri Polier* (New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Maya Jasanoff considers relationships between French and British collectors in her study on collecting in the British Empire, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750–1850* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006).
- 2 See Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell, 1786–1794: The Complete Aquatints* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980); and *Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1992), esp. 129–53; Vidya Dehejia and Pratapaditya Pal, *From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India, 1757–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Giles Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000); and John Bonehill and Geoff Quilley, eds., *William Hodges 1744–1797: The Art of Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
- 3 Well-known studies on this topic include Richard Barnett, *North India Between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British, 1720–1801* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Michael Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures: Awadh, the British, and the Mughals* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1987); and Chris Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- 4 Though some scholars have linked the V&A folios to the *Palais Indiens* paintings, they have concentrated solely on stylistic connections. Proof of the relationship rests on a largely unexamined eighteenth-century catalogue kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (hereafter, BnF), which includes the titles of all of the *Palais Indiens* paintings in Paris, and three additional titles: *Sérail et jardin du palais du grand mogul à dely*, *Palais de darachetto àgra* and *Tombeau de saftardjangue*. The first two titles match the inscriptions on two of the studies in London, and are recorded accordingly in the V&A’s catalogues: Archer, *Company Paintings*, 132; and Victoria & Albert Museum, *Art of India: Paintings and Drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (Surrey: Emmett Publishing,

1992). Although the third title matches no entries in the catalogues, a painting bearing a close stylistic similarity to the *Palais Indiens* images, catalogued by the V&A as “An unidentified Muslim building,” unmistakably recalls the mausoleum of Safdar Jang and must be the “Tombeau de saftardjangue” from the eighteenth-century catalogue. Including these three important examples from the V&A enables a more comprehensive analysis of the *Palais Indiens*, as I illustrate in this article. Lafont ascribes the first two of these paintings to the *Palais Indiens*, based on stylistic similarities alone, in *Chitra*, 130.

5 The *Palais Indiens* collection is mentioned in Francis Richard’s excellent introduction to the Gentil materials at the BnF, “Jean Baptiste Gentil Collectionneur de Manuscrits Persans,” *Extr. de Dix-huitième siècle* 28 (1996): 91–110. In addition, three of the folios are published in Lafont, *Chitra*, and a recent exhibition in Delhi featured facsimiles of selected folios, see idem, *Lost Palaces of Delhi* (Delhi: EurIndia and Art Heritage Gallery, 2006). Banmali Tandan’s recently published chapter on the studies, in *The Architecture of Lucknow and Oudh, 1722–1856: Its Evolution in an Aesthetic and Social Context* (Cambridge: Zophorus, 2008), appeared after preparation of this article.

6 See Lafont, *Lost Palaces of Delhi*, 4.

7 On the architecture of Awadh, see Catherine Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Banmali Tandan, *The Architecture of Lucknow and Its Dependencies, 1722–1856: A Descriptive Inventory and an Analysis of Nawabi Types* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 2001); idem, *The Architecture of Lucknow and Oudh*; and Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, ed., *Lucknow: City of Illusion*

(Munich and New York: Alkazi Collection of Photography and Prestel, 2006). For a discussion of the newly emerging eighteenth-century ornamental idiom, see Chanchal Dadlani, “‘Twilight’ in Delhi? Architecture, Aesthetics, and Urbanism in the Late Mughal Empire” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2009), chapters 1 and 3.

8 Besides Duperron’s translation of and commentary on the *Zend Avesta* (Paris: N. M. Tilliard, 1771), he published a treatise on Islamic law, *Législation orientale* (Amsterdam: Chez Marc-Michel Rey, 1778); an account of the history and geography of northern India, *Des recherches historiques et chronologiques sur l’Inde, et la description du cours du Gange et du Gagra*, published as part of Jean Bernoulli’s edited volume on the history and geography of India, *Description historique et géographique de l’Inde* (Berlin: C. S. Spender, 1786–9); and a Latin translation of the Sanskrit *Upanishads* (Strasbourg: Levrault, 1801).

9 BnF, Manuscrits occidentaux, n.a.f. 9366, Lettre de Gentil, fol. 458. Richard states that these are copies of letters sent to the Ministre de la Marine, “Jean Baptiste Gentil,” 96.

10 For a full description of the Gentil collection in the BnF, see Richard, “Jean Baptiste Gentil,” 102–9.

11 These manuscripts are, in order: British Library, India Office Library Collection, Add. Or. 4039; BnF, Manuscrits occidentaux, fr. 24219; and V&A, Asian Collection, IS 25–1980. In addition to Richard’s commentary on the Gentil albums, Archer briefly discusses the scope of Gentil’s commissions in *Company Paintings*, 117–18. The atlas is reproduced in Gole, *Maps of Mughal India*.

12 Gentil, *Mémoires sur l’Indoustan, ou Empire Mogol* (Paris: Petit, 1822), 240–41.

13 “Ce prince, charmé de l’ouverture de cette négociation, voulant me mettre à même de traiter, d’égal à égal, avec les deux seigneurs Indiens, qui étaient à la tête des Anglais, me donna tous les titres qu’un grand de l’inde peut porter, m’appellant *Rafioudoulah, Nazemdjénk, Bahadour, Tadbir-oul-Moulouk*.” Ibid., 244.

14 Ibid., 247.

15 BnF, Manuscrits occidentaux, *Histoire des pièces de Monnoyes qui ont été frappés dans l’Indoustan*, fr. 25287, fols. 115–22.

16 Ibid, fol. 121. The palace was reportedly later sold to Safdar Jang by Juliana’s descendants at an undervalued price; see Lafont, *Chitra*, 11.

17 Razia (r. 1236–40), a ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, was the daughter and successor of Shams-ud-din Iltutmish; Nur Jahan (1577–1645), the “favorite wife” of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, is often perceived as a co-ruler rather than consort; Jahanara (1614–81) was the daughter of Shah Jahan and a noted patron of architecture; and the legendary Begum Samru (d. 1836) was a Kashmiri-born dancer who married a German named Walter Reinhardt, converted to Catholicism, and later led an independent army. She maintained residences in Sardhana and Delhi.

18 These are published in Susan Gole, “Three Maps of Shahjahanabad,” *South Asian Studies* 4 (1988): 13–27.

19 While the Chandni Chowk plan contains multilingual labels, the Faiz Bazaar plan is labeled exclusively in Persian.

20 My thanks to Nick Barnard at the V&A for facilitating this process.

21 Archer points to stylistic similarities between the plans and Joseph Tieffenthaler’s *Historique et Géographique de l’Inde* (Berlin: Spener, 1786) and dates them to 1774; see *Company Paintings*, 132. Gole offers a different interpretation, dating the plans to ca. 1750 based on their inclusion

of buildings that were destroyed in the late 1750s; see “Three Maps of Shahjah-anabad,” 25. This dating is problematic, since the plans could have been produced after the buildings were destroyed, using earlier visual or textual records. See also Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library* (London: Sotheby Park Bernet, 1981), 121, for visual connections between this plan and a similar one of the Red Fort by the artist Nidhamal. Lafont also mentions the plans in conjunction with the *Palais Indiens* album, but does not provide his reasons for their inclusion in this group, or interpretation regarding dating; see *Chitra*, 130.

22 Lafont, *Chitra*, 24.

23 For a general introduction to this material, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

24 Amina Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court* (New York: H.N. Abrams 1992), 148–65, 216–25.

25 See Milo Cleveland Beach, Ebba Koch, and Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama: An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1997), 80.

26 Ebba Koch, “The Hierarchical Principles of Shah-Jahani Painting,” in Beach, Koch and Thackston, *King of the World*, 131–43. While Koch discusses accurate architectural representation as a specific feature of the *Padshahnama*, Beach considers the *Padshahnama* as exemplary of broader trends in Shah Jahani painting; see *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, 131–32, 167. In addressing the painting “Vishnu with Lakshmi and Attendant Ladies,” by Ruknuddin, he asserts that “its Mughal affiliation” is evident through visual characteristics such as “the specificness of its architecture.” Koch also suggests a

possible use of European models for techniques of architectural representation in the *Padshahnama*, pointing to angled bird’s-eye city views, overhead aerial views, and multiple perspectives. As Koch acknowledges, there has been no systematic study of the use of European geographical works in Mughal painting during this period.

27 This map and its dating are discussed in Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (New Delhi: Bookwise, 2006), 34, and Susan Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans: From Earliest Times to the Advent of European Surveys* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989), 201.

28 My thanks to Ebba Koch for sharing this plan with me. She has attributed it to the eighteenth century; see Koch, *Complete Taj Mahal*, 49, 76.

29 For an analysis of examples in comparative perspective with early modern Ottoman architectural plans, see Gülru Necipoğlu, “Plans and Models in 16th-century Architectural Practice,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 45, no. 3 (Sept. 1986), 224–43; see also her comparative chapter on plans and scrolls in *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995). See also R. Lewcock, “Architects, Craftsmen, and Builders: Materials and Techniques,” in *Architecture of the Islamic World*, ed. G. Michell (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 112–43.

30 For a discussion of modular planning in Mughal architecture, see Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development, 1526–1858* (New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 110.

31 For contrasting views on potential European influences on the planning of Jaipur, and implications for graphic plans,

see Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans*, 44; Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India: 1750–1850*, trans. Agnes George and Elenore Zettersten (London: Faber, 1968), 193–95; and Vibhuti Sachdev and Giles Tillotson, *Building Jaipur: The Making of an Indian City* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 11–31 and 43–46. The goal of this essay is not to engage with the question of the origins of these conventions.

32 The painting is also cited in this context in Necipoğlu, “Plans and Models”; E.S. Smart, “Graphic Evidence for Mughal Architectural Plans,” *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, 6 (1974): 22–23; and Ahsan Jan Qaisar, *Building Construction in Mughal India: The Evidence from Painting* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 15.

33 Qaisar, *Building Construction*, 14.

34 *Ibid.*

35 For a full discussion of the status of architects and the professionalization of architecture in the Mughal empire, see *ibid.*, 34–42.

36 The plans discussed in this section are published in Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans*. In addition to documenting each of them, Gole provides a brief overview of their textual inscriptions and discusses their dating.

37 The plan is currently held at the Jaigarh Fort Museum, where I was granted limited access. No cataloguing information is available.

38 See Alexis Rinckenbach, *Archives du Dépôt des fortifications des Colonies: Indes* (Aix-en-Provence: Centre des Archives d’Outre-Mer, 1998). For an additional introduction to this material, see Lafont, *Chitra*.

39 Archer, *Company Paintings*, 117–18.

40 For an alternative perspective on the Hodges paintings, see Natasha Eaton, “Hodges’s Visual Genealogy for Colonial

India,” in Bonehill and Quilley, *William Hodges*, 39.

- 41 Jean-Marie Lafont (*Chitra*, 11) has pointed out that earlier, French-commissioned art should not be assimilated into the later category of “Company School” painting.
- 42 Alam and Alavi, *European Experience*, 1–9; Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, 45–7; Subrahmanyam, “The Career of Colonel Polier,” 46–7; Lucian Harris, “Archibald Swinton: A New Source for Albums of Indian Miniatures in William Beckford’s Collection,” *Burlington Magazine* 143, no. 1179 (June, 2001): 360–66; and Natasha Eaton, “Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750–93,” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 39, no. 2 (Winter, 2006): 227–50.
- 43 Alam and Alavi, *European Experience*, 54–5.
- 44 Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *A Very Ingenious Man: Claude Martin in Early Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 155–76; and Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, 74–5.
- 45 Falk and Archer, *Indian Miniatures*, 14–29.



MAHOMÉTANES VOILÉES.



ÉGYPTIENNE VOILÉE.



EUROPÉENNE COUVERTE D'UN SCHAL.



EUROPÉENNE COUVERTE D'UN MAHRAMA.

“DRESSING TURKS IN THE FRENCH MANNER”

Mouradgea d'Ohsson's Panorama of the Ottoman Empire

1 (FACING)

A. Girardet, anon., Giraud, Langlois, engravings after J. B. Hilair, *Mahométanes voilées, Egyptienne voilée, Européenne couverte d'un schall, Européenne couverte d'un Mahhrama*. Plates 79–82 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 2, 1790. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph courtesy of UNC library

Abstract

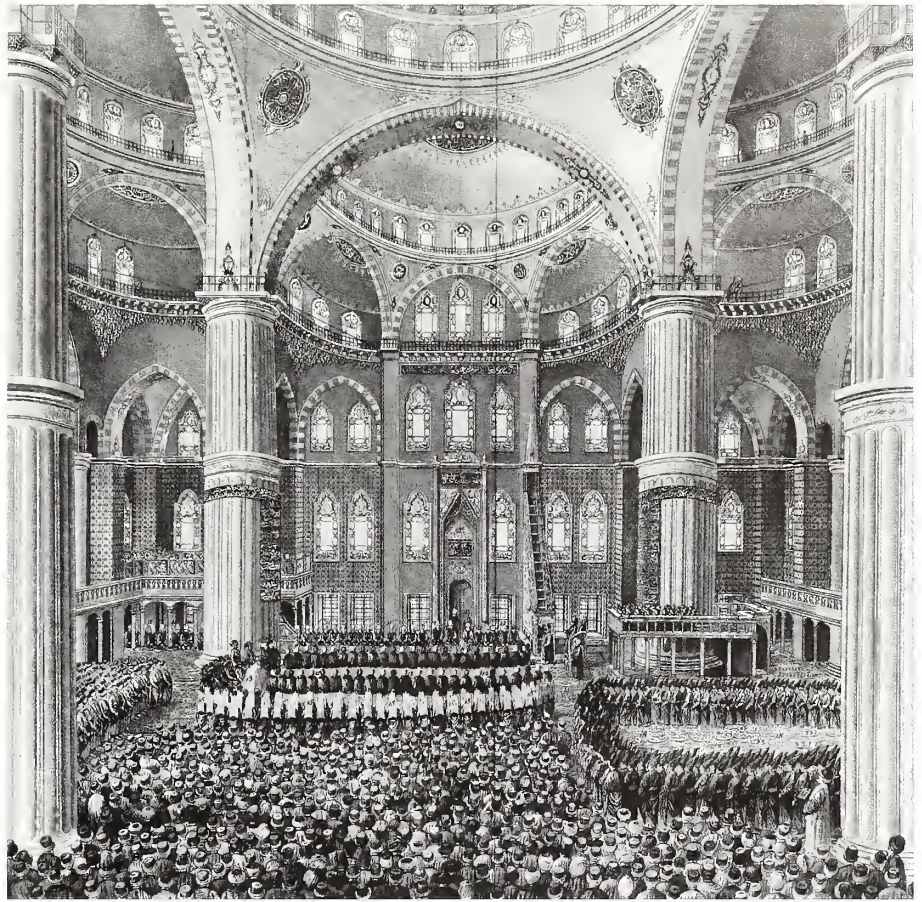
An Ottoman Armenian dragoman (interpreter) active in Constantinople, Mouradgea d'Ohsson (1740–1807) traveled to Paris in 1784 to publish a historical overview of the Ottoman Empire. Writing in a fraught political context following the Russian defeat of the Ottomans, Ohsson forthrightly cast his publication as a defense of Islam and the Ottoman Empire. More than a textual apology, his illustrated book embodies a supreme act of cultural crossing. Written by an Ottoman, the book continues an Ottoman tradition of illustrated historiography, but it was published in French and produced by a large French team of artists and artisans of the book trade, who interpreted and transformed its Ottoman elements, creating a heterogeneous object. Ohsson's book bridges and blurs French and Ottoman cultures, suggesting their contingency and entanglement. Moreover, the process of making this book was itself a cultural encounter for those who were involved, an encounter whose traces remain visible in the final product for the viewer-reader to experience. The cumulative effect of these crossings is to see Ottoman and French forms as connected across a continuum of visual possibilities; the heterogeneity of Ohsson's book served as an allegory of entanglement, interrelation, and alliance in the very moment when they were politically contested.

THERE IS NOTHING IN ISLAM, nothing in the law and authority of the sultans of the Ottoman Empire that is contrary to reasoned governance and the enlightened cultivation of the arts and sciences; only popular prejudice, borne of caprice and passion and contrary to the spirit of the Koran, afflicts the Empire. With these arguments Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson begins his extraordinary *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman* (Panorama of the Ottoman Empire), published in 1787.¹ Ohsson, an Ottoman Armenian dragoman (interpreter) in the service of the Swedish consul in Constantinople, left for Paris in 1784 to publish his magnificent and singular work.² Ohsson wrote in the political wake of the Russian defeat of the Ottomans in 1774; with the renewal of hostilities imminent, a dramatic upheaval in alliances threatened and the sultan now reversed his unilateral politics, seeking coalitions with European powers (Prussia, France, Sweden, and England). In this fraught context, Ohsson forthrightly cast his book as a defense of Islam and the Ottoman Empire.³ But more than a textual apology, his illustrated book embodies a supreme act of cultural crossing. Written by an Ottoman, the book draws on Ottoman historiography and art, but it was published in French and was produced by a large French team of artists and artisans of the book trade, who interpreted and transformed its Ottoman elements, creating a tangibly heterogeneous object. This heterogeneity is the essence of Ohsson's defense of Ottoman culture.

The *Tableau général* is well known to historians of the Ottoman Empire.⁴ Long exploited as important sources of historical information, Ohsson's text and images tend to be evaluated in terms of their accuracy. One of the most interesting aspects of this book, however, is not so much its accurate representation of one culture or another, or even the information it provides about the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth century, but the way that it bridges and blurs French and Ottoman cultures, suggesting their contingency and entanglement. Moreover, the process of making this book was itself a cultural encounter for those who were involved, an encounter whose traces remain visible in the final product for the viewer-reader to experience.

Studies of European and Ottoman interactions are not new; however, they have long been written under the sway of an outdated, retrospective view that sees the Ottoman Empire as entering a state of progressive decline from about 1600, and looking increasingly to Europe.⁵ Consequently, concern with this interaction has been slanted toward the study of "Western" influences on Ottoman culture. But new Ottoman history rejects this so-called decline paradigm, an overtly Orientalist construction, whereby cultural innovation and vitality were widely equated with Europeanization.⁶ As ways of interpreting Ottoman and European histories have shifted, so too must relations between Ottoman and European culture be reconsidered.⁷

Ohsson's book, with its adoption of the language of reform, has been interpreted by diplomatic historians in terms of European meaning-making, as part of a Westernizing embrace of the politics of the European Enlightenment.⁸ But this would be to miss a subtle countercurrent in his volumes. His *Tableau général*, with its self-conscious, autoethnographic defense of the Ottomans, offers a precious perspective onto a meeting of French and Ottoman cultural actors, extending from a history of crossings back and forth that is only beginning to be fully acknowledged.⁹ As Suraiya Faroqhi has recently concluded, "Before the last quarter of the eighteenth century [...], the Ottomans and their European neighbours still inhabited a common world."¹⁰ Ohsson's work, then, insinuates and strategically relies on likenesses between French and Ottoman imperial culture precisely at a moment when this commonality would be politically contested. Within these entangled histories, Ohsson's project is unique in bringing together both Ottoman and French artists, artisans, and writers in the creation of a single object, which fostered a mutual study of forms and technologies at a pivotal historical moment, in a period when the Ottomans were increasingly concerned with the necessity of building diplomatic alliances. In what follows, I look at the *Tableau général* as a product of active agents consciously adopting cross-cultural modes, implicitly negotiating issues of legibility, significance, and acceptability into the bargain.



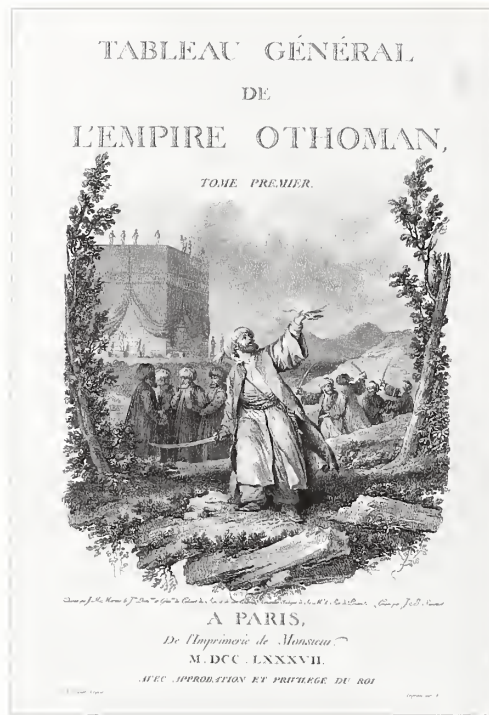
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F. Née, engraving after C. N. Cochin,
Célébration de la fête du Mewlud,
dans la Mosquée de Sultan-Ahmed.
Plate 25 from Ohsson, *Tableau*
général de l'Empire Othoman, vol. 1,
1787. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur
Photograph BnF

Remaking the French Illustrated Travel Book

Ohsson chose France, with its luxury book trade, as the place to produce his work. France was the Ottoman Empire's oldest European ally and had good relations with the Swedish court, to which Ohsson was connected as interpreter to Sweden's representatives in Istanbul, Gustaf and Ulric Celsing.¹¹ His diplomatic services on behalf of Sweden, which went far beyond his duties as translator, were so appreciated that King Gustav III ennobled him in 1780.¹² Ohsson gratefully dedicated his book to the Swedish monarch.

Ohsson's *Tableau général* was an ambitious enterprise, printed by the famous French typographer Pierre-François Didot, and illustrated by some of the most sought-after French artists and print makers of the time. Initially planning as many as eight volumes with hundreds of prints,¹³ Ohsson ultimately published two thick volumes in 1787 and 1790, both well over three hundred pages; a third, nearly five hundred pages in length, was completed by his son in 1820 after his death. According to his published book prospectus, he intended to cover the dauntingly immense topics of "the customs, mores, religion, and laws of the Ottomans" but only the sections on Islamic, civic and military law were completed, while many of the other topics are dealt with in abundant digressions.¹⁴ His three massive, large-folio tomes together contain a total of 233 plates, many of which are double-page or larger. At least twenty-eight artists (painters, designers, and engravers) were involved in the production of the book, whose artistic direction was initially assumed by Charles-Nicolas Cochin, a major figure in the eighteenth-century French art world and well



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J.B. Simonet, engraving after J. M. Moreau le Jeune. Frontispiece from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 1, 1787. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph BnF

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C.N. Varin, engraving after J. M. Moreau le Jeune. Frontispiece from Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, vol. 1, 1782. Paris: s.n. Photograph BnF

experienced in book illustration.¹⁵ The number and quality of these fine prints, along with the attention paid to typography and paper, place Ohsson's publication clearly within the bibliophile book trade of the period. The production of high-quality illustrated books reached a peak in France during the last several decades of the eighteenth century and bibliophile collectors were willing to pay high prices for finely produced works.¹⁶ Ohsson's enterprise, then, was as much commercial as it was political and pedagogical, involving large sums of money.

Illustrated travel books were becoming a cultural phenomenon in France in this period.¹⁷ Many travel books included costume plates, particularly publications on the Ottoman Empire because of the great diversity of Ottoman ethnic, religious, regional, professional, and political identities that were articulated through dress.¹⁸ Ohsson's book has over 150 costume plates, illustrating court and military hierarchies and social types (Fig. 1). In other ways, the *Tableau général* can be seen as related to types known in French travel literature: many of his subjects were common to books on the Ottoman Empire, including scenes from the imperial court and harem, ambassadorial receptions, the Bayram festival, Eyüp cemetery, women at the *tandir*, the hammam, and views of the most famous mosques (Fig. 2).

A reader of Ohsson's volume in 1787 would have been particularly struck by similarities between it and the famous *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, published in 1782 by Count Marie-Gabriel de Choiseul-Gouffier, who was subsequently appointed French ambassador to Constantinople in 1784, the year Ohsson left that city for Paris.¹⁹ A highly publicized and well-received work, Choiseul's *Voyage* created a prototype followed by artists and authors who published travel books after him: richly illustrated volumes made for the bibliophile market, sharing many of the same artists and engravers, size (grand-folio) and format (interleaving text and plates), typography, type of decoration (*fleurons*, vignettes, *culs-de-lampe*), and mode of distribution (through subscription) and production (collective).²⁰



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De Longueil, engraving after J. B. Hilair, *La Roméca, danse des femmes grecques*. Plate 93 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 2, 1790. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph courtesy of UNCLibrary

Like Choiseul, Ohsson launched his publication with a handsome prospectus and subscription campaign and announcements in learned journals. In determining his format and price, a grand 150 livres per volume with a subscription and 180 without, Ohsson was advised to use Choiseul's as a standard.²¹ Ohsson's title page (Fig. 3), with a fine vignette by Jean-Michel Moreau, mimics the page composition of Choiseul's (Fig. 4), which was also designed and engraved by Moreau. The engraver Jean-Baptiste Tilliard and artist Jean-Baptiste Hilair, who were responsible for almost all of Choiseul's images, also produced many of Ohsson's. (Indeed, Cochin had counseled Ohsson to hire Tilliard specifically because of his success with Choiseul's work.)²² Like the *Voyage pittoresque*, the Armenian's publication included landscapes and costume plates, along with court scenes and rituals. Some of his specific subjects were the same as Choiseul's (and those of other travel accounts): the traditional Greek dance called the *Romeca* (Fig. 5), the *cirid* (javelin) game, and official reception scenes. The late nineteenth-century cataloguer of the great eighteenth-century book tradition, Jacques-Charles Brunet, who considered Choiseul's book one of the best of the period, also praised the "especially fine execution" of Ohsson's work.²³

Ohsson's references are multiple and complicated and do not point exclusively to Choiseul's publication.²⁴ Nonetheless, a comparison of the two does illuminate the *Tableau*'s specific qualities and helps us see the balancing act between two cultures in which Ohsson and his artists were engaged. Selective borrowings are part of Ohsson's fascinating process of translation, where he appropriates certain forms in order to make his views and concepts legible to his French audience, a delicate act of mediation which Ohsson's correspondent Ulric Celsing referred to as "dressing up Turks in the French manner." Likewise, I understand the word "translation" not as a transparent transference of meaning from one medium or language to another,



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B. L. Henriquez and A. Girardet,
engravings after J. J. Le Barbier l'aîné
and anon., *Tschenky ou Danseur
public, Danseuse publique*. Plates 89–
92 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de
l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 2, 1790. Paris:
Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph
courtesy of UNC library

but as an act of cultural mediation—suggested by Celsing’s sartorial metaphor—in which process, naturally, meanings and forms are disturbed; the “original” is inevitably transformed.²⁵

Choiseul’s book provided Ohsson with a structure and an external shape, helpful in lending his enterprise commercial and intellectual legitimacy: recognized by his audience, the format of Choiseul’s large-folio illustrated volume gave Ohsson’s approach and subject (Muslim doctrine) familiar form. But the Frenchman’s work also provided a kind of negative framework: while conforming to some of its external appearances, Ohsson shifted the content to encompass a different perspective, countering the Orientalist tropes lacing the French aristocrat’s account of his voyage through the Ottoman Empire. We might say that he used the conventions of travel literature in order to subvert them.

Although Choiseul’s book covers the Ottoman regions Romelia and Anatolia, it skirts the Ottoman Empire as a political and cultural entity, whereas Ohsson’s—despite its nominal focus on religious doctrine—features extensive coverage of Ottoman history and contemporary life, including such topics as social prac-

tices, dress, architecture, and cooking, among many other sub-themes. Choiseul's primary focus on antiquity, common in early modern European travel literature, is suggested in the classical geographic terms he uses (Greece, Asia Minor) rather than the geopolitical one preferred by Ohsson (the Ottoman Empire).²⁶ Choiseul pays little attention to the administrative structure of the Ottoman Empire, contemporary Ottoman culture, or Islam; where these subjects do appear in his work, it is usually in negative or generalized terms. His itinerary places him in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire where he only occasionally encounters provincial pashas. By contrast, Ohsson's work focuses on the elite culture of the Ottoman capital and especially on the court and military hierarchy.

The *Tableau général* is itself a travel book in an important sense: it is a product of Ohsson looking back at the Ottoman Empire from his perch in Paris; he, like other travelers, is also looking as a cross-cultural figure. The book is informed in many ways by the place in which he produced it. Ever the translator, the dragoman frequently compares Ottoman and European custom, a common convention in travel literature, but Ohsson usually avoids suggesting a preference for one or the other. Muslim women of the Ottoman Empire, he says, lack the grace and elegance of European women, but they have instead a nobility of dress and the charms of a simpler nature (see Fig. 1).²⁷ Europeans stand up to greet a newcomer to a room; Ottomans do not, as it is not their custom to move freely about a room once installed in it. Only the sultan or members of the Divan sit "à l'Européenne" (on a chair) on specific ceremonial occasions. Never does an Ottoman sit cross-legged or stretch out a foot while seated unless he is in the presence of intimate friends or inferiors.²⁸ These comparisons contextualize and clarify customs but do not, for the most part, provide a scale of values. Moreover, the bringing into a comparative relationship of French and Ottoman culture undercuts exoticist approaches to the latter: Ohsson places cultural similarities and differences within a common frame of reference.

In one fascinating passage juxtaposing European and Ottoman social practices, Ohsson explains that Muslims never go to European parties in the capital (although sometimes Greeks do). A young seigneur of the court might occasionally permit himself to attend but he would take precautions, sitting withdrawn on a corner sofa. Here, in a *mise en abîme*, Ohsson imagines the Ottoman prince watching Europeans at leisure and what would surprise or shock him, a device whereby Ohsson's European readers, the observers of Ottomans as the consumers of this text, suddenly become the watched.²⁹

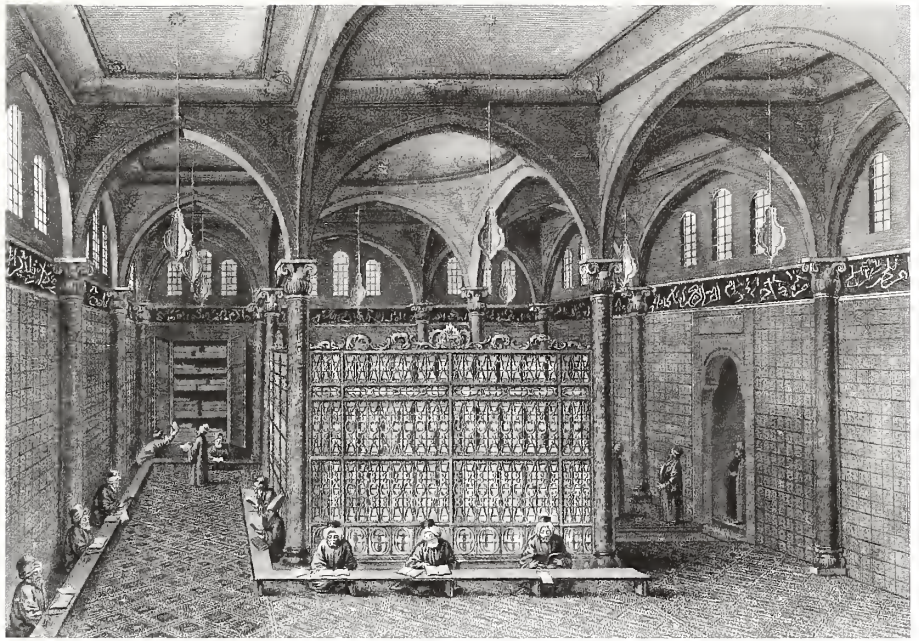
Over and over again, Ohsson portrays Ottoman culture and Muslim practices as sober, serious, dignified, and designed to inculcate moral behavior, countering Choiseul's generalizations. Writing about a festivity he has happened upon, Choiseul describes "Turks" as fanatical, driven by a kind of grotesque drunkenness and

vice; the dancers are obscene. By contrast, Ohsson's discussions of music and dance are specific, not generalized: he describes who practices what and under what conditions. Although music is in theory prohibited by religious doctrine, it is practiced in specific places, claims Ohsson: in Constantinople and other big Ottoman cities, some do enjoy music passionately; the sultan himself listens to music performed by pages and slave girls. No music is performed in a mosque, however. According to Ohsson, the Muslim interdiction against dance is taken far more seriously in the Ottoman Empire: Christian Greeks do dance (see Fig. 5), especially at Easter when they have a special dispensation (*firman*) to do so; Muslims for the most part do not dance, unless they are part of the public troupes of dancers (which rarely in fact include Muslims) or slave girls (Fig. 6). In another example, Choiseul's images of resting "orientals" (see Fig. 11) conjure up the stereotype of the indolent Turk, a theme the author develops in a passage on the Ottomans' discouragement of industry.³⁰ The maxims of Islam are designed to instill a work ethic, Ohsson flatly declares by contrast.³¹ In his descriptions, even the pleasures of court life are occasional and limited: a day's outing to Beşiktaş along the Bosphorus (depicted in Ohsson, plate 169), the spectacle of javelin-throwing (*cirid*) performed by the palace pages (Ohsson, plate 171), and a return at day's end to the administrative work of New Palace (now Topkapı). In this way, filling in gaps left by Choiseul's book, providing some new terms and omitting others, opening new perspectives, Ohsson departs from this prototype and transforms it.

Ohsson's work also tellingly omits maps and plans, important components of contemporary travel books of all kinds: with their obvious strategic value, maps were one of the main reasons the French government was so interested in funding travel books. (In a note buried in the archives, Napoleon's minister of war writes to Choiseul in 1802 asking for maps in his possession used for his publication.)³² Choiseul's book is studded with maps, but Ohsson was clearly not interested in the surveying of Ottoman space, the making visible and accessible of Ottoman territory.

Promoting the Ottoman Culture of Letters

If Ohsson's *Tableau général* harnesses the prestige of the French book to his defense of Ottoman society, using the power of the book and the trappings of the French book trade to new ends, its author also makes it clear that bibliophilia is not the exclusive domain of the French.³³ An Ottoman might learn from France's book culture, but Ohsson's French readers can also learn from his: Ohsson's publication is a two-way proposition, as he makes clear in a lengthy discussion of Ottoman books and manuscripts. The author tells us, in his usual top-down approach, that Ottoman princes greatly favor the "culture of letters" in their states and that most imperial mosques have public libraries (called "Kitab-Khanes"), "built with taste



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C. L. Lingée, engraving after C. N. Cochin, *Bibliothèque publique du Grand-Vézir Raghib Pascha*. Plate 33 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Ottoman*, vol. 1, 1787. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph BnF

and elegance,” with thirty-five in Constantinople alone.³⁴ Those who own books (manuscripts and printed books) will them to public libraries. Always mindful of the court hierarchy, he does not fail to mention the sultan’s private collection of manuscript books, as well as two large libraries in the imperial palace: the Ahmed III and Mustafa III foundations. After a plate illustrating Arabic characters, two particularly fine prints overseen by Cochin depict two public libraries: one (Fig. 7) represents the library founded by Grand Vizier Raghib Pasha, an interior view attentive to the architectural details and elegance of the vast space and conveying a sense of its hushed solemnity. A third image by Hilair presents “livres turcs” to show the format of Ottoman books and their famous leather bindings. (Book bindings were also much admired in late eighteenth-century France.) A detailed history of the famous Istanbul printing press established by Ibrahim Müteferrikâ in 1729 follows.³⁵ According to Ohsson, Ottoman rulers had long been reluctant to allow the establishment of a printing press because of its possible negative effects on the important commerce of manuscript production within the Ottoman Empire. Ahmed III finally allowed a press to be set up to print works on philosophy, medicine, astronomy, geography, history, and science. So important is this printing press to the image Ohsson seeks to convey that he provides a complete list of the books printed by Müteferrikâ, including histories of the “grands hommes” of the Orient, the Ottomans’ maritime expeditions, and Egypt and its conquest by Selim I. Another publication is a deliberation on different forms of government, good administration, and the military arts. (How close these subjects sound to the kinds of topics addressed by eighteenth-century French authors!)

But it is not merely in describing and picturing aspects of Ottoman book culture that Ohsson valorizes it. His book embodies this culture, alluding to and drawing upon Ottoman traditions. History-writing, an important feature of the Ottoman manuscript tradition, spawned a rich visual culture of illustrated books in which text and miniatures formed a composite whole.³⁶ These court-sponsored works combining word and image, produced from the fifteenth century following the

Ottoman conquest of Istanbul, were executed by teams of artists, scribes, and bookbinders overseen by a court historiographer and master illustrator.³⁷ Ohsson, who had gathered a team in Paris to create his own illustrated Ottoman history, might well have seen himself as the heir to this imperial tradition.

Imperial illuminated histories were produced into the early eighteenth century, with the *Surname* manuscript written by the poet Vehbi and illuminated by the artist Abdülcélil Çelebi, known as Levni, and his school circa 1721.³⁸ Ohsson suggests that Müteferrikâ, whose founding of the eighteenth-century Istanbul printing press he has just discussed, also carried on the tradition of illustrating history, imitating “Persian” manuscripts in books produced by his press. Citing the success of Müteferrikâ’s illustrated *History of the West Indies* (*Tarihü’l-Hindî’l-Garbi el-Müsemma bi Hadis-i Nev*), supported by “enlightened ministers,” Ohsson applauds the “novelty of a project so contrary to the prejudices of the multitude.” His praise for the printer’s work comes at the end of a discussion of Muslim prohibition against images: he promotes Müteferrikâ’s government-supported work as an example of how easily prominent statesmen could encourage representational arts in Ottoman society, an encouragement that he regards primarily as a question of the courage to go against the tide of popular opinion.³⁹ (Only sultans who commissioned portraits have previously had this courage, he asserts.) With its revival by Sultan Abdülhamid in 1784 under the direction of the imperial historiographer, the Istanbul printing press was now at work, Ohsson tells us, on a suite of Ottoman history.⁴⁰ Tellingly, Ohsson ends this discussion of the printing press, illustrated histories, and religious views about images with a lengthy exposé of his efforts in obtaining images for his own work, implicitly linking his own enterprise with the “courageous” publishing innovations of the Istanbul press. (Indeed, Ohsson claims it was on reading a work produced by that press that he conceived the idea for his own book.⁴¹) In that context, Ohsson’s own *Tableau général*, as an illustrated history book produced in large part thanks to his connections within the court hierarchy, intervenes in this debate about Islam and images in Ottoman practice.⁴² Ohsson presents his work, like Müteferrikâ’s illustrated history, as an initiative from above to turn the tide of popular opinion, placing it, moreover, within a historiographic lineage. Ohsson implicitly styled his *Tableau general* as a continuation of Müteferrikâ’s publishing activity, bringing Ottoman print culture to France. The effect is not to emphasize Ottoman adoption of a European technology, but the reverse: to connect print culture to a specifically Ottoman book tradition and, hence, to remind his readers of the longevity of the Ottoman Empire. Even as he appropriated the trappings of French book production and travel literature, then, Ohsson positioned his book within Ottoman historiography.



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J. B. Tilliard, engraving after J. B. Hilair, *Musulman faisant la prière*, *Namaz*. Plate 14 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 1, 1787. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph BnF

Authentically Ottoman

Throughout his text, Ohsson returns to his great efforts in gathering primary material for his publication. His court connections gave him access to official annals, “my titles of authenticity for all that I put forward, because the most scrupulous truth and exactitude are in my eyes the primary merit of this work.”⁴³ Assuring his French audience of his book’s “authenticity,” this use of Ottoman sources also legitimizes it as a novel contribution to writing about the Ottoman Empire in France. Ohsson presents his credentials, his direct experience, and his connections to the inner circles of the court hierarchy: “Born in Constantinople, raised in that country, and attached all my life to the service of a court allied with the Porte through intimate relations,” Ohsson vaunts his special qualifications for his task. They derive not only from his service with the Swedish consulate, but also from “particular charges in the direct service of the Porte.” Seeing “ministers and the principal officers of diverse departments almost every day,” Ohsson “came to know profoundly ... all the objects that concern this nation.” The heads of departments of state themselves had such confidence in the dragoman and his historical project, he claims, that they eagerly offered him excerpts from their own ledgers.⁴⁴

Of particular importance to Ohsson are the images that make up such a significant portion of his book. In the book itself, he goes into some detail about his great pains to obtain them, dramatizing his difficulties by emphasizing and perhaps exaggerating the dangers involved, and returning to the subject in several passages.⁴⁵ These discussions of images ring with words like “fidelity,” “faithfulness,” “truth,” “exactness,” and “scrupulousness,” signaling the author’s particular concern to make the reader aware of the images’ authenticity. Ohsson is adamant that all of his prints are derived from paintings made in Istanbul: in addition to copies of a special album of sultans’ portraits (never used), “all the other prints that adorn this work are part of a collection of paintings executed locally [dans le pays]. [...] Their composition, the work of many years, was directed with the greatest care. The most scrupulous truth and exactitude are their greatest merit. All these paintings are now being engraved in Paris.”⁴⁶



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N. LeMire, engraving after J. B. Hilair, *Habitans de la Carie*. Plate 93 from Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, vol. 1, 1782. Paris: s.n. Photograph BnF

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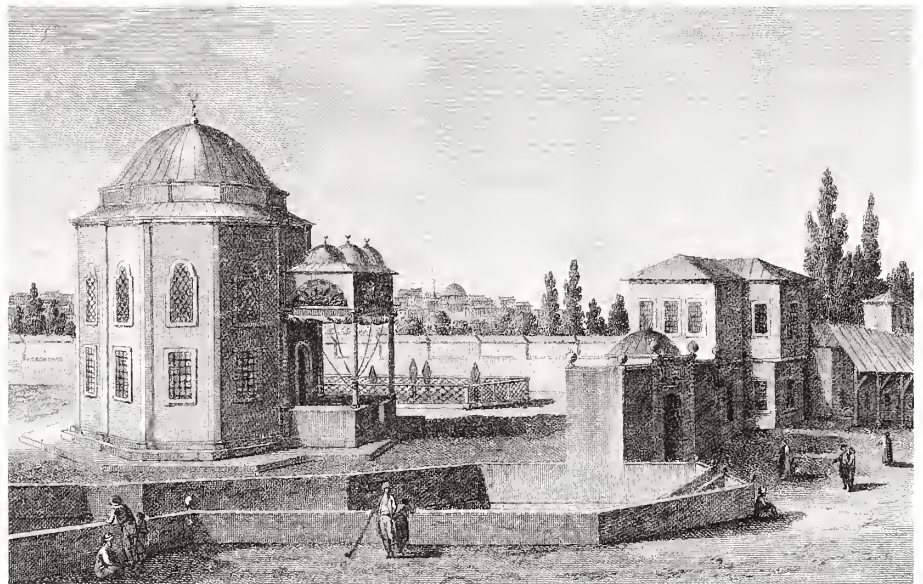
L. Petit, L. Croutelle, anon., Hubert, engravings after J. B. Hilair and anon., *Othoman avec sa barbe, Jeune Othoman, Arabe, Tatars*. Plates 63–6 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 2, 1790. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph courtesy of UNC library

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Returning to this theme later in his work, he again is emphatic about his great efforts to obtain images made in situ within the Ottoman Empire. The difficulty in obtaining images is twofold in Ohsson's exposé. First, he has to contend, he claims, with a Muslim reluctance to deal with images, particularly figural ones, obliging artists to take "infinite precautions," and to "work in their homes or mine, in silence and secrecy." Second, he needed official protection and to get it, he had to overcome officials' fear of being compromised. It was through official connections, he asserts, that he was able to get drawings of the interiors of mosques, burial chapels, libraries, and the rooms of the Divan. According to Ohsson, artists who had worked in the imperial palace were able to make images of the sultan's apartments, the harem, and imperial kiosks, but images of burial chapels proved most difficult to get because no Christian was allowed to enter; he had to convince Muslim painters to overcome "their superstitious prejudices."⁴⁷ He concludes: "With this exposé of the means I have employed for more than ten years to form the collection of paintings and drawings relative to Ottoman history, one can glean the trouble and expense this aspect of my work occasioned me and the research I did on all that pertained to civil society and political administration."⁴⁸ He leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that these images are particularly estimable, as they were difficult to come by and were produced within the Ottoman Empire itself by people who were knowledgeable about Ottoman culture—unlike, one is given to infer, the images in French travel literature.



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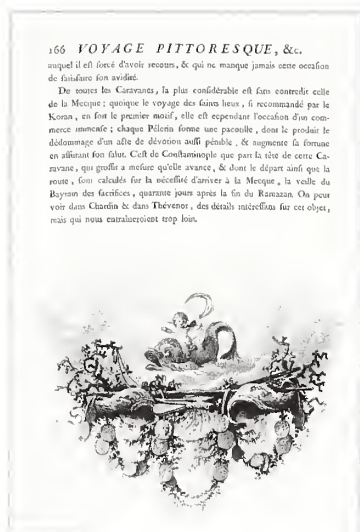
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J. Dambrun, engraving after
J. B. Hilaire, *Vue d'un théâtre de
Telmissus*. Plate 71 from Choiseul-
Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de
la Grèce*, vol. 1, 1782. Paris: s.n.
Photograph BnF

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A. Delattre, engraving after
J. B. Hilaire, *Chapelle sépulchrale de
Moustapha III*. Plate 31 from Ohsson,
Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman,
vol. 1, 1787. Paris: Imprimerie de
Monsieur. Paris: s.n. Photograph BnF

By comparison with Choiseul's plates, many of Ohsson's prints themselves are stark and sober, standing for the simple dignity he identifies as the core of Muslim practice. The illustrative clarity of the images underscores Ohsson's spare, direct language: akin to a how-to guide to Muslim practices, two images, for instance, demonstrate the various stages of daily prayer (*namaz*) for men (Fig. 8) and women. The difference between Choiseul's and Ohsson's images holds true even when the images were made by the very same artist. With his light touch, Hilaire infuses his images in the *Voyage pittoresque* with optimism and serenity and fills them abundantly; in the *Tableau général* his images are stripped down, plain, and simplified. Using the same serialized format of four plates appearing on one sheet, Hilaire's inhabitants of Caria (Fig. 9) for Choiseul and his Ottomans, Arab, and Tatars for Ohsson (Fig. 10) share the usual conventions for costume plates: the figures appear isolated in a loosely defined landscape with a low horizon line that sets them off. They pose, gesture, tilt their heads, and turn in different directions in a way that is



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C. N. Varin, engraving after J. B. Huët?,
Cul-de-lampe. From Choiseul-Gouffier,
Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce, vol. 1, 1782,
166. Paris: s.n. Photograph BnF

meant to undercut the potential monotony of serialization. But the plates for the *Voyage pittoresque* are noticeably richer: full, deep shadows define the figures, the landscape settings are more elaborate, and the figures hold attributes and props. Even the terrain on which they stand is enlivened by greater detail in the vegetation, rock, slope, and fall in the earth, and vast cloud formations animate the skies behind. Similarly, if we compare an architectural image after Hilair from each work, the ruins of a theatre at Telmessus (Fig. 11) in Choiseul's book and Mustafa III's burial chapel (Fig. 12) in Ohsson's, the view of the latter is emptier, more basic, and far less whimsical, dominated by hard lines and clear structures, which vegetation does little to soften. This contrast suggests the distinct purposes of the two works, but it also points to differing origins and visual traditions.

The austerity of many of the images is underscored by the absence of decorative motifs typical of illustrated books in the period, the *fleurons*, vignettes, *bandeaux*, and elegant *culs-de-lampe* (Fig. 13) which grace Choiseul's book with such abundance. These elements, mostly commissioned pieces, added to the duration and expense of book production, so it is possible that they were omitted from the *Tableau* for financial reasons. Nonetheless, their absence contributes to the overall effect of the book's sobriety and seriousness. When compared with Choiseul's book, these differences connote directness and frankness—the bare, unvarnished truth—which commentators interpreted as signs of the work's authenticity. The royal censor who evaluated the manuscript, for example, praised its “character of truth, authenticity, and most profound erudition.”⁴⁹ Cochin wrote, condescendingly, of its “naive truth,” a view I discuss further below. The sober appearance of Ohsson's book, seen as a kind of “reality effect” by contemporaries, countered the picturesque appearance of Choiseul's, lending it greater authority.

Making Ottoman Images French (Or Not)

As is already apparent, the story of the images in the *Tableau général*, their origins and their transformation into prints, is complex. (The subject has been dealt with in detail by art historians Günsel Renda and Christian Michel.)⁵⁰ Gathered from a diverse range of sources, the images Ohsson had made in Istanbul were either copies of earlier works (imperial portraits, illuminated manuscripts), or original works. Discerning exactly who executed these paintings is difficult, above all because the artists are unnamed in the final work, Ohsson dramatically invoking his vow to preserve the anonymity of those who were involved in the different parts of his enterprise to protect them from potential ridicule.⁵¹ References to authorship of the original works are general and contradictory: in his prospectus and “Discours préliminaire,” Ohsson refers broadly to “Greek and European painters” but later mentions Muslim painters as well; Cochin refers vaguely to “Greek or Italian artists.”⁵²



14

14

Berthault, engraving after L. N. de Lespinasse, *Vue de la Mecque*. Plate 45 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 2, 1790. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph courtesy of UNC library

Yet Cochin clearly regarded the paintings from Istanbul as foreign, and, for him, strange. Although both Ohsson and Cochin mention European artists, Cochin's lengthy discussion of the production of engravings makes it evident that these images had to be transformed, translated into what would be for him a recognizable and acceptable idiom. Complaining that "all the figures are too short, their heads too big," the artist says the paintings are "of a great exactness, but without taste, without effect, and with a disagreeable perspective."⁵³ His negative assessment aside, his list describes well features that distinguish Ottoman from French art, even in the later eighteenth century: the different proportions of figures; the use of exact, strong contours; an absence of atmospheric effects; and high perspectives. It is the different cultural origin of Ohsson's images, in part, that gives many of the prints a palpably different appearance from those of other illustrated French books of this period.

Ohsson's description of how he came by the images of Mecca (Fig. 14) and Medina is particularly elaborate. After seeing paintings made by a "Muslim painter" who accompanied a court official on a pilgrimage in 1778, Ohsson obtained permission for copies to be made by "one of the best painters from Istanbul," to which figures were added to show the pilgrims' movement around the Ka'aba for the first day of Bayram.⁵⁴ Images of Mecca were not scarce in Ottoman culture, but this one, an enormous tableau-like, double-sized plate, one of the most remarkable of Ohsson's prints, might well be based on direct observation. Günsel Renda convincingly presents a gouache painting of the Holy Cities by court painter Kostantin



15

15

J. B. Simonet, engraving after J. M. Moreau le Jeune, *Alaih ou Marche du Surré-Eminy avec les Chameaux sacrés et le Trésor pour la Mecque*. Plate 47 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 2, 1790. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph courtesy of UNC library

Kapıdağlı, executed for Sultan Selim III, as a version of the painting he most likely made for Ohsson's work.⁵⁵ Its skewed perspective, reduced color range, and simplification of form are not conventional in French art and have been softened by the French designer and engraver, who have also added lush nuance and texture to the scene, visible in the final engraving. With its large-scale, panoramic perspective, and high horizon line, the print shows Mecca spread out before the viewer. The city is embraced by mighty mountains, rendered in stunning engraving and echoed in form by the snaking line of pilgrims, whose infinite (or at least uncountable) number is suggested by the infinite reach of the vast landscape. Figures, box-like buildings, and mountains multiply serially throughout the image, which strikingly encompasses both small detail and vast scale in one. It is a particularly felicitous marriage of Ottoman art and French print making.

Because of a legal wrangle between Cochin, François Denis Née, Cochin's principal partner in carrying out the engravings, and Ohsson over payments and costs, we know more than usual about the making of this book. In addition to his correspondence, where he mentions this demanding project, Cochin also wrote a lengthy memorandum describing it, to be used as part of his legal defense. (In the end, the three men came to a settlement arbitrated by a notary, and Cochin and Née ceased work on the publication.)⁵⁶ As the supervisor of the image-making process for at least the first and part of the second volumes, Cochin was responsible for having the Ottoman paintings commissioned by Ohsson drawn (or redrawn) by an

intermediary draftsman as preparation for the engraving. (It was a standard part of the complicated process of creating copper engravings in the eighteenth century for a designer to prepare a highly finished drawing for the engraver, usually in reverse, to the exact size determined for the print.)⁵⁷ His description of this process provides a rare glimpse into the mechanisms of a cultural encounter, making Cochin's account especially valuable. After all, processes of European transculturation, as Mary Louise Pratt has argued, are often only visible as subterranean traces and are frequently repressed or ignored by those who publish travel accounts.⁵⁸

Although Cochin criticized the Ottoman images, he valued their "great exactitude" and "naive truth," a phrase mixing praise with condescension. "I had to correct everything, and I redid almost all of it," but "I was taken with the idea of conserving the naively true effect [these works] have; I only want to perfect them without abandoning their true system of nature."⁵⁹ Ohsson himself seems to have vacillated between leaving the Ottoman images as they were and having French artists completely repaint them, as was apparently done for a few images before the draftsman made the drawing for the engraver to work from. Moreau, initially engaged as draftsman for the project, urged that all the works be redrawn completely.⁶⁰ This was counter to Cochin's view, as he admired the way the Ottoman images bore "a character of truth that, possibly, none of our sophisticated artists would be able to capture to the same degree. I am obliged, since I want to conserve this truth whose importance I so value, to redraw all the figures that are too small and whose heads are too big, taking care not to 'frenchify' [*franciser*] them, something that our best draftsmen would no doubt accomplish."⁶¹ Since, in addition to obliterating elements of the originals, the process of repainting was time-consuming and expensive, Cochin developed a technique of contour drawing that adjusted the Ottoman images minimally.

Differences in attitude and approach to the images brought by Ohsson from Istanbul help to explain why the final prints in his book present clearly differing pictorial idioms.⁶² The "Frenchness" Cochin sought to avoid is evident in some of the images, obviously made by artists who did not share Cochin's qualified appreciation for the Ottoman works. For instance, Moreau's masterful double-page print of the procession of the Süre Emini (Fig. 15) resulted from a work redone most likely by Moreau himself. Its perspective, with a lower horizon line and a softer integration of detail into the whole (with Moreau's characteristic extreme fineness), reads very differently from the Mecca image, which is more clearly the product of an aesthetic merging.⁶³ The element of what Cochin saw as "naive truthfulness" is gone.

Overall the whole process of image-production for this work was tremendously complicated (and expensive), involving three or four maker-translators: the Ottoman artist who rendered the first image, the French painter who repainted the

image in some cases, the French designer who made the engraver's drawing, and the French engraver. What emerges from Cochin's description is a conception of the image-making process where French artists functioned less as translators—making Ottoman images French—than as performers of Ottoman-ness—French artists making Ottoman images. This process necessarily entailed a confrontation with and even a kind of study of Ottoman art. And because of the diversity of visual interpretations—the degrees to which Ottoman or French traditions are made visible—the reader of Ohsson's book becomes aware of this aspect of it: it is not submerged or hidden. (Ohsson's reiterated explanations of how he obtained his images further heighten his reader's awareness of this aspect of the book's production.) The process of translation is made visible and the reader-viewer is enjoined to participate in a cultural encounter—or at least to observe it unfolding in the book.

Several of the images in the *Tableau général* are derived from Ottoman manuscripts, adding yet another layer to the process of image-making and translation. (Ohsson calls them "Persian," presumably a translator's shorthand.) In introducing his first plates, Ohsson claims they are "copies fidèles" of these manuscripts, but their attempt at fidelity—their performance of Ottoman-ness—varies considerably. Some are derived from court historiographer Seyyid Lokman's 1583 illustrated manuscript, a world history entitled *Zübde'tü't Tevarih* (Quintessence of Histories) that linked the Ottoman sultans to the prophets and past Islamic rulers.⁶⁴ These images were most likely transmitted to the French artists via copies made by a contemporary Ottoman artist. Each visual correspondence to or divergence from the Ottoman originals reveals the artistic decision-making entailed in the creation of these images.

Adam (the first prophet) and Eve, appearing in the first plate in Ohsson's book (Fig. 16), are shown, in the author's words, in "oriental costume" in earthly paradise, next to the tree of life and death. In the original illumination (Fig. 17) their children, represented in differing scales, surround them and angels fly overhead, but all these figures are eliminated in Tilliard's print, probably done after a drawing (or gouache) by Hilair. The engraved representation of Adam and Eve, who stand alone on either side of the tree, more closely resembles European than Ottoman iconography. The flames above their heads remain—Ohsson explains that Adam is suspended between fire and water, body and spirit—though they are made more ethereal. Only these flames and the tree (lacking the apples and snake conventional to European images) with a river flowing from its base adhere to the original iconography of the Ottoman miniature. The appearance of Adam and Eve, too, has been considerably modified: the figures are stouter and more volumetric, their faces rounder and more detailed, and they stand in a field of light-



16

16
J. B. Tilliard, engraving after J. B. Hilair?, *Adam et Eve*. Plate 1 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 1, 1787. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph BnF.

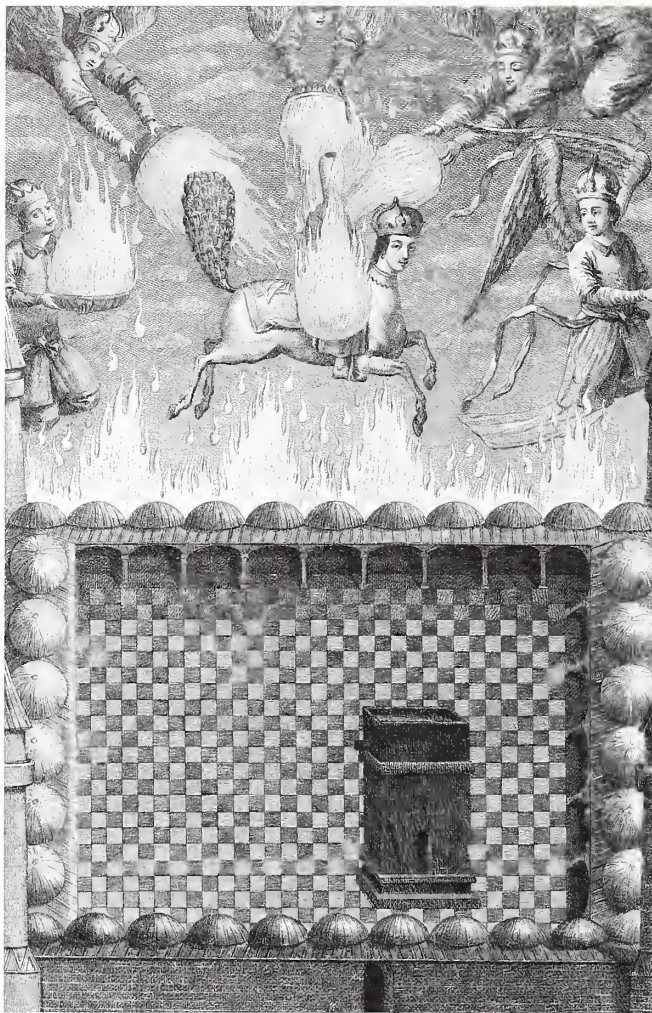


17

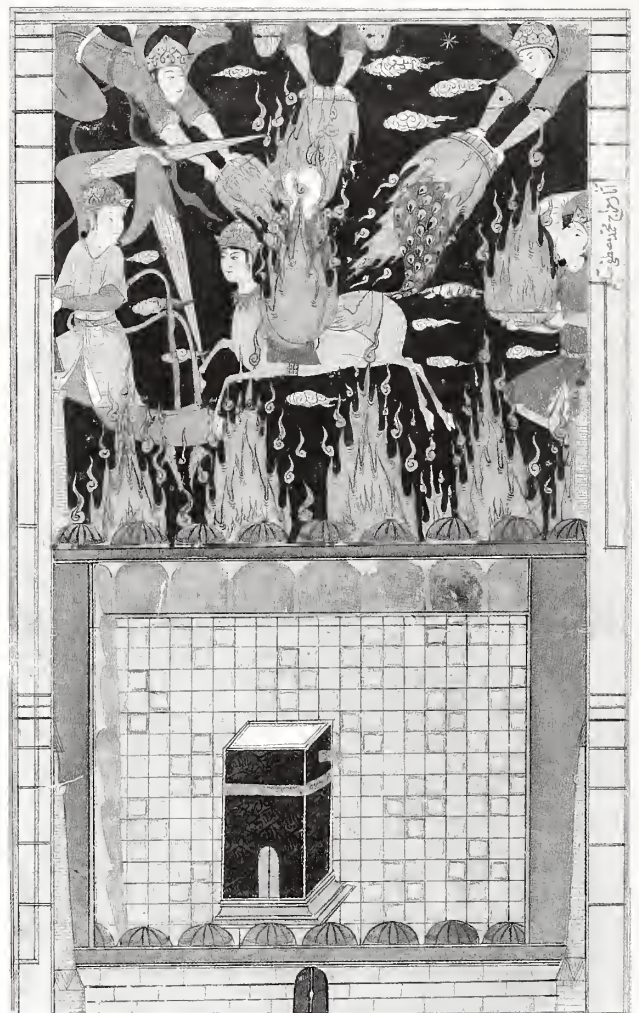
17
Adam and Hawwa (Eve), from *Zübdetü't Tevarih* (The Quintessence of Histories), Istanbul, late 16th century. 39.5 x 25cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, T 414, fol. 53a. Photograph © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

ened space rather than on or against a flat ground, casting shadows on the earth that recedes behind them. Delicate modeling replaces monochromatic and patterned surfaces. That the image is reversed right to left probably indicates that the intermediary drawing made for the engraver was not itself done in reverse, as was the usual practice in fine French book illustration, possibly suggesting a disregard for the original.⁶⁵ The image of Adam and Eve has become a French representation of "oriental" figures.

The depiction of the Miraj, Muhammad's night journey from Mecca (Fig. 18), is closer to its sixteenth-century Ottoman source (Fig. 19) than the engraving of Adam and Eve, perhaps because there is no corresponding European visual tradition to represent the subject. In this image, Muhammad rides Buraq, a human-headed beast, led by Gabriel and other angels, from the shrine of the Ka'aba in Mecca.⁶⁶ Although the image is once again reversed, the French draftsman retained the multiple perspectives given in the original: the Ka'aba is seen frontally within the courtyard of the Grand Mosque against a checkered floor viewed from above; the nearest and furthest walls are also seen frontally, with two nominally vertical minarets positioned at left and right lying across the aerial view of the side arcades (hence compressing two views into one plane). In Ohsson's plate, engraved by Tilliard, the architecture is given greater density, depth, and some shading, all of



18



19

18

J. B. Tilliard, engraving after anon.,
Assumption de Mohammed. Plate
2 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de
l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 1, 1787. Paris:
Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph
BnF

19

Miraj, Muhammad's Night Journey,
from *Zübdetü't Tevarih* (The
Quintessence of Histories), Istanbul,
late 16th century. 39.5 x 25cm.
Chester Beatty Library, Dublin,
T 414, fol. 121. Photograph © The
Trustees of the Chester Beatty
Library, Dublin

which works to make the construction easier to read as a three-dimensional space according to post-Renaissance perspectival rules. But the convention whereby the Prophet's face is obscured is adhered to: in the print we see only his foot in a stirrup and his turban, a flaming halo blocking the rest from view. In the upper quadrant of this plate, the arrangement of figures, their actions and attributes closely resemble those in the Ottoman original, but again everything is rounder, more modeled, with a greater sense of depth. The clouds, flatly incised, curled shapes in the Lokman manuscript, become softer, less tangible forms that recede behind the figures, subtly opening up space. But the iconography is wholly Ottoman.

This becomes clearer still when compared with the opening title page (see Fig. 3), a very fine *fleuron* engraved by Jean-Baptiste Simonet after Moreau, which places Muhammad in the flesh in the center foreground, entirely visible from head to foot, in a dramatic pose, his emotive visage raised heavenward as his left hand holds up the Koran. His right hand aggressively brandishes an unsheathed saber. Ohsson describes the scene, which represents

the Ka'aba in Mecca with its idols, which Muhammad overturns to establish the cult of a single god, on the ruins of paganism. In one hand his saber, in the other the leaves of the Koran, instruments for subjugating minds and



L'IMAM SCHAFIY.

L'IMAM AZAM EBU-HANIFE.



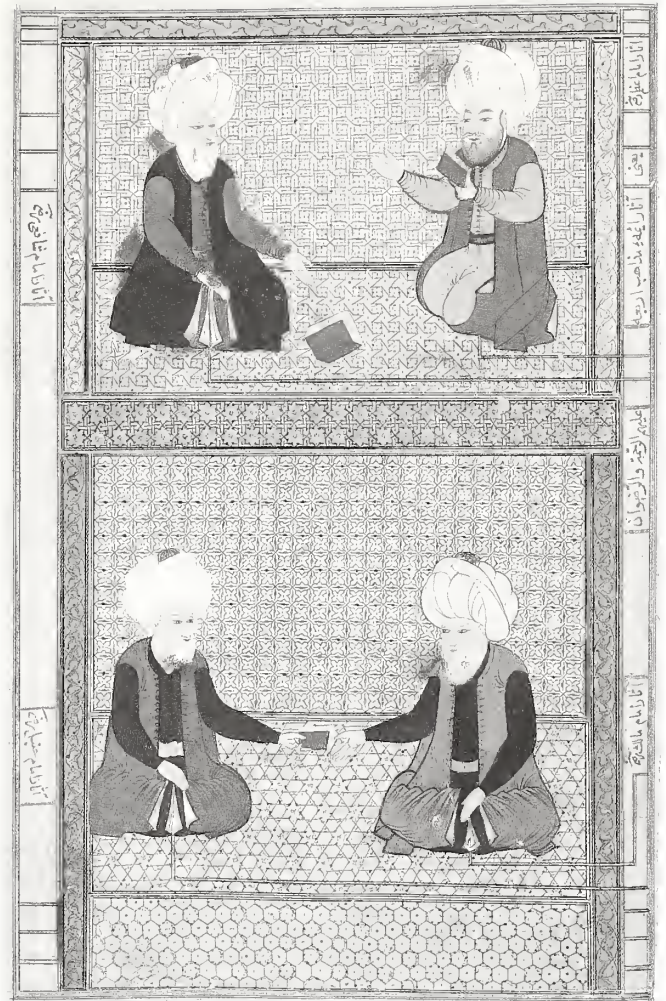
L'IMAM HANNBEL.

L'IMAM MALIK.

20

20

J. B. Simonet, engraving after J. B. Hilair, *L'Imam Schafiy, L'Imam Azam Ebu-Hanife, L'Imam Hannbel, L'Imam Malik*. Plates 8–11 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 1, 1787. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph BnF



21

21

Heads of Legal Schools, from *Zübdetü't Tevarih* (The Quintessence of Histories), Istanbul, late 16th century. 39.5 x 25 cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, T 414, fol. 130a. Photograph © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

propagating his doctrine. On the right side we see the first four Caliphs, and on the left side, the four Imams who were the authors of religious legislation and founders of the four orthodox rites. The Caliphs are armed with a saber, the Imams with the Koran, [...both groups...] spreading the doctrine and power of Muhammad with different means.⁶⁷

A deep space defined by the conventions of European landscape painting, the image is framed heraldically by vertically thrusting trees; with their dense, inky texture, the trees function as repoussoir devices. A series of rises and dips in the terrain beyond shapes compositional space, in which are clustered the Caliphs and Imams. The composition recedes atmospherically into the deep background where the horizon is edged by soft mountain forms and the sky is activated with darkened, billowing storm clouds. The terrain opens into the foreground, giving Muhammad a stable plinth, with rocks and vegetation forming its edges. Nothing about this image suggests an Ottoman convention. If this image was adapted from an Ottoman work—and this appears highly unlikely—the original has been completely cancelled out.

Among the images in which we see French artists meeting and matching pictorial effects, trying to adopt a pictorial idiom different from their own, the results

vary. This is clearest in cases where the imagery can be likened to conventional European subjects. In Hilair's depiction of the four Imams who were founders of the Sunni rite (Fig. 20), all are seated, turbaned figures, shown in pairs, gesturing simply to each other and holding the Koran. They are drawn from the same Lokman manuscript of 1583 (Fig. 21) as the images of Adam and Eve and the Miraj. Eliminating the patterned backgrounds and floors (which have become rich carpets), and adding modeling and mass to the figures, Hilair and the engravers François-Robert Ingouf and Simonet have pulled them towards French modes of representation. Yet if we compare these images to others by Hilair, for instance, his drawing of seated Albanian soldiers for Choiseul (Fig. 22), we notice a more static quality in the image done for Ohsson. There is a subtle disjuncture between the Imams' heads and bodies; their heads are slightly, disproportionately large; and the faces are expressionless and the eyes unseeing. The rendering in the Ohsson print lies somewhere between the more stylized, iconic treatment of the sixteenth-century miniature, with its serial repetition of four figures in nearly identical poses and dress situated symmetrically on the page, and the lively scene-setting of Hilair's usual figural compositions. To strike this balance, Hilair must have closely studied the Ottoman work he was given.

This case is very different from the representation of Mehhdy (Fig. 23) by De Longueil after Le Barbier, also based on a "Persian" manuscript according to Ohsson, although no original has been identified. In a sumptuous engraving displaying a virtuoso range of textures and contrasts of light and dark, the seated figure of Mehhdy appears in his cave, with a gesture close to that of the Imams, but the handling of his form and of the space is unlike those in either Hilair's work or the miniatures. (It is also the only print in which the French artists' royal and academic credentials are boldly asserted along with their names in the lower margin.) Whatever image Le Barbier worked from, he was not interested, it would appear, in conveying some specifically Ottoman quality.

Finally, some transformation appears to result also from the French artists' confusion. Le Barbier's view of a women's public bath (*Tableau général*, vol. 1, pl.13) is a good example of this: the recognizably Ottoman architecture ultimately does not make spatial sense: the middle area of the ceiling collapses in on itself, failing to suggest recessive space. A neoclassical painter, Le Barbier knew well how to render deep space and architectural settings, but his work records his confusion in reading his Ottoman source image.

The cumulative effect of all these visual crossings is to blur the boundaries between French and Ottoman forms, to see them as connected across a continuum of visual possibilities. To see before one the means by which cultural translation might happen was to envision a world—to adapt Suraiya Faroqi's phrase—that



22

22

J. B. Hilaire, *Soldats albanais*, drawing for Plate 2 from Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, vol. 1, 1782. Private collection, work of art in public domain. Photograph by the author

Europeans and Ottomans still shared. The heterogeneous object that Ohsson the dragoman created can be read as a model of desired political behavior, an allegory of entanglement, interrelation, alliance, with the understandings and also miscomprehensions they entail.

As Ohsson's first volume was going to press, Constantin-François Volney was penning his seditious ruminations on why France should abandon its alliance with the Ottomans, in the aftermath of their defeat by the Russians in 1774 and with the present renewal of hostilities. "One must henceforth acknowledge that their empire offers all the symptoms of decadence," he wrote, continuing further on, "All Europe has felt that the Turkish empire is now but a useless phantom, and that this colossus dissolved of all its ties, awaits only a shock to fall into ruin."⁶⁸ Ohsson's book could be seen as an attempt to forestall this conclusion, a demonstration against the diplomacy of separation and dissolution.

Ohsson's *Panorama of the Ottoman Empire* is the kind of object that needs to be uncovered if we are to decenter European empires as the inevitable apotheosis of modern history. John Darwin, in his recent global history, *After Tamerlane*, calls for placing European imperialism in a much larger context: amid the empire-, state- and culture-building projects of Eurasia.⁶⁹ In writing today of the eighteenth-century decline of the Ottomans, historians echo Volney, problematically anticipating the fall of the Ottoman Empire almost 150 years in advance of its actual demise. This anticipatory conquest underwrites a history of empire that culminates in the grand narrative of the "Rise of the West." Rather than perpetuate this triumphalist position, I prefer, in the words of Ottomanist Virginia Aksan, to "bury the Ottoman sick man" and develop "models of reform in early modern empires" that explain the survival and rebirth of the Ottoman Empire and consequently, I would add, create more complicated pictures of Ottoman-European cultural interaction.⁷⁰ I see Ohsson's book as an example of this kind of representational strategy that explains, rather than dismisses, Ottoman longevity.



23

23

De Longueil, engraving after J. J. Le Barbier l'ainé, *Mehhdy*. Plate 7 from Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, vol. 1, 1787. Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur. Photograph courtesy of UNC library

The Dragoman's Art

That a traveler from Constantinople could oversee the making of this most unusual object is testimony to Ottoman cosmopolitanism, long eclipsed by one-sided accounts of European travel writing. As dragoman, Ohsson's role had already been to translate between cultures, he already was a go-between (as had been his father, a dragoman in Izmir (Smyrna), before him). His book, too, was an instrument of intercultural connection, drawing together the three cultural elites to which he was most closely affiliated: Swedish, French, and Ottoman. But it would be wrong to see Ohsson exclusively as a representative of official interests or a pawn of diplomatic negotiations.

Ohsson, Ottoman native, Franco-Armenian Catholic, Swedish subject, dragoman, diplomat, and learned scholar, produced not only a defense of the Ottoman Empire but also a self-defense as well. The *Tableau général*, with its many layers of mediation, is a celebration of the art of translation. Styling himself in his Ottoman dress in Paris, appearing before the Ottoman ambassador after leaving Paris sporting a (European) wig, Ignatius Mouradgea, ennobled as Chevalier d'Ohsson, clearly knew how to perform his status as cultural mediator.⁷¹

Just as many European travelers to the Ottoman Empire (and elsewhere) forged their social and professional standing through their travel publications and images, Ohsson formed his reputation with this book. Choiseul's *Voyage pittoresque* had brought its author membership of no less than three prestigious French academies and his nomination as ambassador in Constantinople, where he served until his exile to Russia in 1792. Likewise, Ohsson's book can be seen as a successful act of self-making and self-promotion with multiple ends: acceptance into European society, advancement as a diplomat, the gaining of the sultan's favor. When Ohsson returned to Istanbul in 1792 he presented his two volumes to Selim III and was rewarded with 2000 gold pieces. Ohsson's diplomatic career took off and he was charged with high-level negotiations by both the Ottomans and the Swedes.⁷²

In many ways Ohsson positions himself in the text, despite the seemingly neutral tone he takes. He represents himself and his own point of view in his periodic criticisms of the Ottoman Empire (among them the way it treated Catholics). His clear preference for the culture of the elite betrays his identification with court circles and officialdom, repeatedly manifest in his negative view of popular opinion, which he depicts as fanatical. In the very idiosyncratic form of the text, he presents a kind of subjective interpolation that interrupts the systematic quality and distant tone taken throughout. In sections labeled "observation," "variant," and "commentary" that can digress for many pages from the main subject at hand, Ohsson seems to most clearly represent his own experience; these sections are among the most valuable and interesting in the book. Historian Carter Findley humorously observes, "As one plunges into reading the book"—where "lengthy 'observations' on Turkish cooking, Sufi orders, or Greek dances [are inserted] into a discussion of Islamic law"—"the schematic clarity of the table of contents becomes difficult to keep in mind."⁷³

But above all Ohsson positions himself as author and progenitor of this monumental enterprise, despite the collectivity behind its construction. Taking advantage of the new regulation in favor of authors, Ohsson obtained a *privilège général* (a form of copyright) in 1787, securing his exclusive right to publish and enjoy the profits from his *Tableau général* in perpetuity. Only recently instituted in 1777, this regulation marked a major shift in the book trade; previously authors had essentially ceded their rights to the publishers, with no copyright or royalty in the transaction.⁷⁴ But in the case of the *Tableau général*, the great Didot was a mere printer; it was Ohsson who was author and publisher.⁷⁵ The certificate of *privilège*, appearing at the end of volume one, bears the censor's report praising Ohsson's knowledge. As an act of authorship and a display of erudition, Ohsson's self-defense was also simultaneously a demonstration of the Ottoman culture of learning. In 1788, a year after Ohsson's first volume appeared, another censor, writing a report for

the Bureau de la Librairie on a manuscript about Ottoman literature, sheepishly admitted that until recently the French had assumed no literature could thrive in this Muslim culture. His words echo those Ohsson used in the opening to his book:

We have to admit that we did not believe Turks at all capable of giving themselves to Study and to Letters: we saw them even as condemned by the Law of their Prophet to a kind of ignorance, from which they could not extract themselves. Now, when in France Literature and Philosophy, having made greater progress, have accustomed us to seeing things from a more truthful point of view, we are beginning to blush at this prejudice; they have convinced us that the Turks, just as the European Nations, are capable of cultivating with success Sciences and Letters.⁷⁶

Perhaps Ohsson's book, with its celebration, even demonstration of Ottoman culture and of the art of translation itself, had made its mark.

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NOTES

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A note on usage: Ohsson was called by a variety of names, with differing spellings, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Mouradja, Mouradjah, Mouradga d'Ohsson, d'Ohsson, and so on. I have chosen the simplest modern usage, defined by the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

- 1 Ignatius Mouradga d'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1787, 1790, 1820). Ohsson concludes his "Discours préliminaire" with this defense, p. IX: Although the Ottomans are isolated, "tous les maux publics et particuliers qui affligent les Othomans, n'ont pour principe ni la religion ni la loi; [...] ils dérivent des préjugés populaires, de fausses opinions et de réglemens arbitraires dictés par le caprice, la passion, l'intérêt du moment, tous également contraires à l'esprit du Cour'ann et au dispositif de la loi canonique." In a plea for reform in the Ottoman Empire, Ohsson calls for a sage, enlightened, enterprising sultan, whose task would be made simpler by his absolute authority over his subjects, and who would cultivate more intimate relations with Europeans.
- 2 According to Ohsson, he had been gathering materials in Constantinople for many years, and most likely did some of the writing there. He also wrote in France, apparently with the aid of at least one other person. On the genesis of Ohsson's

book, see Carter Findley, "Writer and Subject, Self and Other: Mouradga d'Ohsson and his *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*," in Sture Theolin et al., *The Torch of the Empire: Ignatius Mouradga d'Ohsson and the Tableau Général of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür, 2002), 27–8.

- 3 See Christoph Neumann, "Political and Diplomatic Developments," in *Cambridge History of Turkey*. Vol. 3, *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 57–62.
- 4 Ohsson's work is less well known among European historians: it is not mentioned in Thomas Kaiser, "The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture," *Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 1 (March 2000): 6–34; nor in Dorinda Outram's discussion of religious tolerance in the Enlightenment, which in fact makes no reference to the eighteenth-century literature on Islam. See Outram, "The Rise of Modern Paganism? Religion and the Enlightenment," *The Enlightenment*, rev. ed. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 109–25.
- 5 See Virginia Aksan, "The Long Ottoman Road," review of Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1923*, H-Turk, H-Net Reviews (July 2007), <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/>.
- 6 Faroqi's edited volume, *The Later Ottoman Empire 1603–1839*, exemplifies this revisionist approach to early modern Ottoman history, as does her *The Ottoman Empire and the World around It* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004). For a discussion of this issue in the context of eighteenth-century Istanbul architecture, see Shirine Hamadeh, "Westernization, Decadence, and the Turkish Baroque:

Modern Constructions of the Eighteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 185–97. Hamadeh counters the notion of "Westernization" as a force imposed on a compliant Turkish audience to reveal the internationalism of Ottoman culture, including Mughal and Persian as well as European elements. Ussama Makdisi makes it clear that this Orientalist perspective was not simply a European construction, but was also strategically adopted by some Ottomans in the nineteenth century: see his "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002), pp. 768–96. I refer to "Orientalism" as defined by Edward Said in his classic *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

- 7 For a recent survey, see Günsel Renda, "Europe and the Ottomans: Interactions in Art," in *Ottoman Civilization*, vol. 2, ed. H. Inalcık and G. Renda (Ankara: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2004), 1090–1122. See also Mary Roberts and Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones, eds., *Edges of Empire: Orientalism and Visual Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); Mary Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Travel Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007); Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French–Ottoman Encounters, 1830–1914* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); and Nebahat Avcioğlu, *Turquerie and the Politics of Representation, 1728–1876* (Ashgate, forthcoming). On the importance of Ottoman scholarship, even in accounts of European representations of the Middle East, see Zeynep Çelik's trenchant critique, "Review of *Orientalism and Visual Culture: Imagining Mesopotamia in Nineteenth-Century Europe*; and Francis Friith in *Egypt and Palestine: A Victorian Photographer*

Abroad," *Art Bulletin* 88, no. 1 (March 2006): 191–4.

- 8 See Philip Mansel's essay, "The *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman* as Symbol of the Franco-Ottoman, Franco-Swedish and Swedish-Ottoman Alliances," in Theolin et al., *Torch of the Empire*, 77–83.
- 9 I borrow here from Mary Louise Pratt's use of the term "autoethnography." It is her interpretive emphasis on contact and exchange in selective processes of "transculturation" that informs my own approach: "how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture." I adapt the term to Ohsson's circumstances; Ohsson was hardly a subordinate, but he was an outsider appropriating French forms to address, in part, a European audience. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 7–9.
- 10 See Faroqi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*, 211.
- 11 On the Swedish-French-Ottoman alliance against Russian expansionism, see Mansel, "The *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman* as Symbol." For the diplomatic complications of France's position, see also Kaiser, "Evil Empire?"
- 12 On Ohsson's background, see Findley, "Writer and Subject," 24–6.
- 13 The "addition au prospectus" mounted on the prospectus bound into a copy at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF) mentions six or seven volumes, but Cochin writes in a letter of 1786 that there are to be 700 to 800 prints in at least eight volumes. See Christian Michel, ed., "Lettres adressées par Charles-Nicolas Cochin fils à Jean-Baptiste Descampes, 1757–1790: Correspondances d'artistes des XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles," *Archives de l'Art français* 28 (1986): 77.

- 14 "Les usages, les moeurs, le culte, et les lois des Othomans," *Prospectus*, 2.

- 15 On Cochin, see Christian Michel, "Une entreprise de gravure à la veille de la Révolution: Le *Tableau général de l'empire othoman*," *Nouvelles de l'estampe* 84 (1985): 6–25.
- 16 This is the subject of Antony Griffiths's engrossing and informative *Prints for Books: Book Illustration in France, 1760–1800* (London: British Library, 2004); see also Anne Schroder, "Illustrators and Illustrations," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. A. Kors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 251–7.
- 17 On the rise of travel literature, see Daniel Roche, "Les livres de voyage à l'époque moderne, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle," *Bibliothèque nationale de France* 22 (2006), 5–13. On the genre of the illustrated travel book, see Elisabeth Fraser, "Books, Prints, and Travel: Reading in the Gaps of the Orientalist Archive," *Art History* 31, no. 3 (June 2008): 342–67.
- 18 This tradition is exemplified by the famous Ferriol compendium of Levantine costumes of 1714, an embassy production that must have been well known in diplomatic circles: *Recueil de cent estampes représentant différentes Nations du Levant, tirées sur les Tableaux peints d'après Nature en 1707 et 1708 par les Ordres de M. de Ferriol, ambassadeur du Roi à la Porte, et gravées en 1712 et 1713 par les soins de Mr Le Hay*, Paris, 1714. A tradition of costume albums also existed within the Ottoman Empire itself, flourishing particularly at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when they were made for Ottoman consumption as well as for European markets. See Nurhan Atasoy, et al., "The Birth of Costume Books and the Fenerci Mehmed Album," in *Ottoman Costume Book: Fenerci Mehmed* (Istanbul: Vehbi Koc Vakfi, 1986), 22–30; Leslie Meral

- Schick, "The Place of Dress in Pre-modern Costume Albums," in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, ed. S. Faroqhi and C. Neumann (Istanbul: EREN, 2004), 93–101; and Günsel Renda, "Ottoman Painting and Sculpture," in Inalcik and Renda, eds., *Ottoman Civilization*, 934–5.
- 19 The continuation of Choiseul-Gouffier's book was interrupted by his exile to Russia during the French Revolution; only in 1809 did a second volume appear and a third was published posthumously in 1822. For the most part, then, Ohsson's book would have been responding to Choiseul's first volume only, published in installments between 1778 and 1782, and it is to this volume that I refer throughout. For a more detailed discussion of Choiseul's publication, see Fraser, "Books, Prints, and Travel," and Frédéric Barbier, "Le comte de Choiseul comme guide: voyage pittoresque en Grèce en compagnie d'un noble français du XVIII^e siècle," *Gryphe. Revue de la Bibliothèque de Lyon* 4 (2002): 3–12. (A note on usage: Choiseul acquired his hyphenated last name, Choiseul-Gouffier, through marriage; in eighteenth-century and present-day usage, "Gouffier" is commonly dropped.)
- 20 Two prominent examples are Louis-François Cassas's *Voyage pittoresque de la Syrie et de l'Égypte* (Paris: Imprimerie de la République, 1799) and Antoine-Ignace Melling's *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople*, 2 vols. (Paris: P. Didot l'aîné, Treuttel and Würtz, 1819).
- 21 See Ohsson's correspondence, cited in Findley, "Writer and Subject," 31. Prices are taken from the prospectus.
- 22 Michel, "Une entreprise de gravure," 9.
- 23 Jacques-Charles Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*, 5th ed. (Paris: Didot, 1860–80): on Choiseul-Gouffier, vol. 1, columns 1847–8; on Ohsson, vol. 3, column 1932. Ohsson's prospectus confirms his work's appeal to the luxury book trade and bibliophile collectors: "On n'a rien négligé, ni pour le choix du papier, ni pour la partie typographique. Ils s'impriment chez M. Didot le jeune, dont tout le monde connoit les beaux caractères." A cheaper octavo version of Ohsson's book, with only a few plates, was published beginning in 1788.
- 24 I do not believe that Ohsson saw his work as a "counter-blast" to Choiseul's book specifically, as has been suggested by Mansel in "The *Tableau général de l'Empire Ottoman* as Symbol," 80. Instead, Ohsson seems to respond to a whole category of writing, of which Choiseul's book is a leading example.
- 25 Ohsson's phrase is quoted by Findley, "Writer and Subject," 28. On translation and transculturation, see Madeleine Dobie's excellent essay, "Translation in the Contact Zone: Antoine Galland's *Mille et une nuits: contes arabes*," in *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West*, ed. S. Makdisi and F. Nussbaum (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25–49. For a good basic discussion of the necessarily active interpreting the artist undertakes in looking to prior art, see Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
- 26 Favoring the past over the present and denying contemporaries geopolitical agency are, of course, two fundamental modes of Orientalism as defined by Said.
- 27 Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 2:145.
- 28 Ibid., 214.
- 29 Ibid., 235.
- 30 See Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque*, 164–65. The Turkish administration does not support happiness and prosperity in commerce: "... une constitution absurde et cruelle étouffe l'industrie, et arrête tous les moyens que l'intérêt personnel pourroit inventer et développer." Commerce can only be found in big cities; despotism and a continual state of war kill it in the provinces. "Cet empire immense, maître des pays auxquels la nature a tout accordé, ne peut jouir de ses bienfaits, et languit inanimé."
- 31 According to Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 2:162, all Muslims must work as a religious obligation. "Les moeurs actuelles des Mahométans ne sont que le résultat de ces maximes dont le but est d'encourager l'industrie, de rendre l'homme laborieux, humain, charitable; de lui inspirer l'amour de la vertu, le goût de la médiocrité [moderation], et l'horreur du vice; de lui donner de l'aversion pour le luxe et l'abus des richesses; d'ennoblir enfin toutes les professions de la vie civile, mais sur-tout le métier des armes."
- 32 Archives nationales, T/153/160, Letter of 1802 from the Minister of War to Choiseul-Gouffier.
- 33 The French may have been particularly receptive to this message, as "oriental" illuminated manuscripts and printed books were already being collected in France. The current collection of Oriental manuscripts in the BnF, in which Ottoman books are a major component, was initiated by Colbert under the reign of Louis XIV; it includes acquisitions made through the travels of state emissaries, with the express purpose of manuscript collection, and through the purchase of private collections. On the BnF collection of printed Ottoman books, see Mileva Bozic, "Le fonds imprimé turc de la Bibliothèque Nationale: Les débuts de l'imprimerie ottomane," *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 1, nos. 1; 2 (Sept., Dec. 1981): 8–16; 70–79.
- 34 Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 1:296.
- 35 On Müteferrikâ and the history of printing in the late Ottoman Empire, see

- Christoph K. Neumann, "Buch- und Zeitungsdruck auf Türkisch, 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert," in *Sprachen des Nahen Ostens und die Druckrevolution; Eine interkulturelle Begegnung*, ed. Eva Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass, and Geoffrey Roper (Westhofen: WVA-Verlag Skulima, 2002), 227–48.
- 36 On the importance of history-writing in the Ottoman manuscript tradition, see Nurhan Atasoy, "The Birth of Costume Books," 23; and Filiz Çağman's overview, "Ottoman Miniature Painting," in Inalcık and Renda, *Ottoman Civilization*, 892–931. Çağman sees the sixteenth-century works produced under historian Lokman as the high point of this tradition, in particular his *Zübde'tü't-Tevarih* (1583), from which Ohsson had copies made for his *Tableau*. Findley notes that Ohsson used only Ottoman sources and cites no European authors, "Writer and Subject," 39.
- 37 According to Zeren Tanındı, the master illustrator and historian collaborated, as did Ohsson and Cochin. See Tanındı, "Illustrated Historical Texts in Islamic Manuscripts," in *Islamic Art: Common Principles, Forms and Themes*, ed. A. Issa and J. Tahaoglu (Damascus: Dar-Al-Fikr, 1989), 250–60. Both French illustrated books and Ottoman illustrated histories involved large collectivities: Emine Fetvacı emphasizes the large numbers of people behind manuscript production in "Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566–1617" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2005).
- 38 See Günsel Renda, "Turkish Miniature Painting: The Ottoman Period," in *A History of Turkish Painting*, ed. S. Pinar (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 1988), 58.
- 39 This passage is found in Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 2:239–40. The book on the West Indies was illustrated, Ohsson says, with "twelve little prints" and was successful "despite the imperfection of the planches." Is Ohsson seeking to improve on Müteferrikâ's prior example with his lavish and highly accomplished prints?
- 40 Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 1:301–2. Ohsson does not mention whether this Ottoman history was to be illustrated.
- 41 Ibid., 301.
- 42 The entire section on Islam and images is in Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 2:239–50. Ohsson highlights official support for his research and publication in his prospectus and again in his "Discours préliminaire."
- 43 "mes titres sur l'authenticité de tout ce que j'avance; car la vérité et l'exactitude la plus scrupuleuse sont à mes yeux le premier mérite de cet ouvrage," *Tableau général*, vol. 1, ii–iii, adding that his sources are the chronicles of the monarchy, written in a pompous style by the highest persons of state, "Muftis, Pashas, Reis Efendys," etc. On Ohsson's textual sources, see Findley, "Writer and Subject," 39.
- 44 "Né a Constantinople, élevé dans le pays même, et attaché toute ma vie au service d'une Cour liée avec la Porte par des relations intimes," Prospectus, 2. "Des commissions particulières relatives au service directe de la Porte, de voir presque tous les jours et les ministres, et les principaux officiers des divers départemens, je suis parvenu à connoître et approfondir, du moins autant qu'il étoit possible, tous les objets qui concernent cette nation." Ibid., 3.
- 45 Passages in the book that discuss the gathering of images and their sources include Prospectus, 24–5, 26 (repeated in the "Discours préliminaire"); 1:67, 88, 141, 301; 2:241–5.
- 46 The full quotation is "toutes les autres estampes destinées à orner l'ouvrage, font partie d'une collection de tableaux exécutés dans le pays par des peintres Grecs et Européens. Ils sont relatifs à des fêtes civiles et religieuses, et à tout ce que le culte extérieur, les cérémonies de la cour, et les étiquettes du Sérail offrent de plus curieux et de plus intéressant. Leur composition, travail de plusieurs années, a été dirigé avec le plus grand soins. La vérité et l'exactitude la plus scrupuleuse en font le premier mérite. Tous ces tableaux se gravent maintenant à Paris." Prospectus, 25 (repeated in "Discours préliminaire"). On the documentation concerning images made in Istanbul, see Günsel Renda, "Illustrating the *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*," in Theolin, et al., *The Torch of Empire*, 60 and 65.
- 47 These passages are from Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 2:244.
- 48 "Par cet exposé des moyens que nous avons employés pendant plus de dix ans pour former la collection des tableaux et des dessins relatifs à l'histoire Othomane on peut se former une idée de ce qu'ont dû nous occasionner de peine et de dépenses cet objet de notre travail et les recherches que nous avons faites sur tout ce qui a rapport à l'état civil et à l'administration politique": ibid., 245.
- 49 The royal approbation (*privilege*) citing the censor's report appears at the back of volume one. For Cochin's comments, see Michel, "Lettres adressées par Charles-Nicolas Cochin," 78 and 83.
- 50 See Michel, "Une entreprise de gravure"; and Renda, "Illustrating the *Tableau général*."
- 51 On the necessity of anonymity, see Ohsson, *Tableau général*, 2:245. The works Ohsson had made in Istanbul have apparently disappeared. Various drawings and watercolors by French artists have been found, for instance those reproduced in Theolin, et al., *Torch of the Empire*, but these are most likely images made in the process of preparing the engravings, as described above.

- 52 The mention of Greek artists corroborates Renda's assertion that many of the Istanbul images were by Kostantin Kapıdağlı, an Ottoman Greek court painter. The term "European" in this context is confusing: for instance, in his section on art practices in the Ottoman Empire, Ohsson mentions in passing Ottoman Armenian painter Refail, who had training in Italy; Kostantin, too, along with most eighteenth-century artists, was obviously exposed to European artistic spatial conventions. Late eighteenth-century Ottoman and European art should not be understood as wholly divided visual cultures, but instead as mutually informed through specific points of contact, as Renda asserts. Ohsson and his Istanbul artists would have been aware of this proximity between idioms; it was Cochin who reimposed cultural difference on these works. See Renda, "Illustrating the *Tableau général*," 65–72.
- 53 "toutes les figures [...] sont trop courtes, [...] les têtes sont trop grosses," "d'une grande exactitude, mais sans aucun goût, sans effet et d'un perspective désagréable": Michel, "Lettres adressées par Charles-Nicolas Cochin," 78, 83.
- 54 On this episode, see Renda, "Illustrating the *Tableau général*," 69–70. In a letter, Ohsson identified the official who commissioned the paintings as Yazıcı Efendi, who had held the office of Sürre Emini, the official in charge of carrying the treasures sent to the Holy Cities for the pilgrimages. Ohsson discusses the making of the original images first in his Prospectus, 26 (repeated in "Discours préliminaire") and again at greater length in 2:245.
- 55 See Renda, "Illustrating the *Tableau général*," 70, where Kostantin's painting is also reproduced.
- 56 Christian Michel makes extensive use of the correspondence and *mémoire* in "Une entreprise de gravure." For the settlement, see Archives nationales, ET/LXXXII/631.
- 57 See Griffiths on the making of images for illustrated books, *Prints for Books*, 10–11.
- 58 See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, especially 136. Related issues involving the transmission of images from paintings to prints are dealt with in Finbarr Barry Flood, "Correct Delineations and Promiscuous Outlines: Envisioning India at the Trial of Warren Hastings," *Art History* 29, no. 1 (Feb. 2006): 47–78.
- 59 "qu'il a fallù rectifier, il s'ensuit que j'ay presque tout refait [...] je me suis piqué d'y conserver l'effet naïvement vray qu'ils y ont donné; je ne veux que le perfectionner sans sortir du vray système de la nature; ce à quoy peu d'artistes s'asservissent." Cochin, in Michel, "Lettres," 83.
- 60 See Michel, "Une entreprise de gravure," 9.
- 61 The full passage reads: "Imaginez des tableaux faits en Turquie par des artistes grecs ou italiens qui sont sans goût, sans art, mais qui portent un caractère de vérité que, peut-être, aucun de nos habiles artistes n'auroit pu saisir au meme degré de vérité. Je suis obligé, voulant conserver ce vray dont je fais si grand cas, de redessiner toutes les figures qui sont trop courtes, dont les têtes sont trop grosses, et tout cela avec l'esprit occupé du soin de ne les pas franciser, ce que ne manqueraient pas nos meilleurs Dessinateurs." Cochin, in Michel, "Lettres," 78.
- 62 Christian Michel discusses this diversity closely in his account of the print-making process; see in particular his comparison of two images of dervish lodges, where he identifies the difference between Cochin's preservationist approach, with some rectification of the Ottoman work, and an image done after Cochin resigned from the project. Michel, "Une entreprise de gravure," 22–3.
- 63 Cochin said that Moreau repainted the original, which may have been painted by Kostantin Kapıdağlı. See Günsel Renda and Carter Findley, "Comments on Engravings in d'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*," in Theolin, et al., *Torch of the Empire*, 211.
- 64 According to Renda, who identified this source, three copies were made; one, for the Chief Black Eunuch Darüssade Agasi Mehmed Aga, now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, T 414, is likely the version used for the *Tableau*. See Renda, "Illustrating the *Tableau général*," 68. I am grateful to Elaine Wright, curator at the Chester Beatty Library, for her help with images.
- 65 On the practice of reversal and on the preparation in general of book illustrations, see Griffiths, *Prints for Books*, 10–11.
- 66 See the commentary on this image and its divergence from other Islamic sources in Renda and Findley, "Comments on Engravings in d'Ohsson," 205.
- 67 See Ohsson, "Explication du frontispice."
- 68 "Considérations sur la Guerre des Turks, en 1788," in *Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte* (3^e édition, 1799), rpt. (Paris: Fayard, 1998), 645, 646. Volney began his famous essay in 1787; it was published without censor's approval in 1788, hence London was (falsely) given as the place of publication.
- 69 John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire since 1405* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 2007).
- 70 Virginia Aksan, "Breaking the Spell of the Baron de Tott: Reframing the Question of Military Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1760–1830," *International History Review* 24, no. 2 (June 2002): 277.
- 71 See Findley, "Writer and Subject," 27 and 32. On the dragoman as cosmopolitan, see Maya Jasanoff, "Cosmopolitan: A Tale of Identity from Ottoman Alexandria," *Common Knowledge* 11, no. 3 (2005): 393–409. See also Antoine Gautier, "Les

Drogmans des consulats,” in *La fonction consulaire à l’époque moderne*, ed. J. Ulbert and G. Le Bouëdec (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006), 85–104; and Natalie Rothman, “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4 (October 2009): 771–800.

72 See Findley, “Writer and Subject,” 32.

73 Ibid., 36 and 37.

74 On the system of *privilèges*, see Raymond Birn, “The Profits of Ideas: *Privilèges en librairie* in Eighteenth-Century France,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1971): 131–68; idem, *La Censure royale des livres dans la France des Lumières* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2007); and Antony Griffiths, “An Agreement for Dorat’s *Fables* 1773,” *The Book Collector* 57, no. 2 (summer 2008): 263–77. See also Marie-Claude Felton’s work on self-published authors, “When Authors Made Books: A First Look at the Content and Form of Self-Published Works in Paris (1750–1791),” *European Review of History* 17, no. 2 (April 2010): 241–63.

75 Mansel mistakenly assumes that Ohsson’s *privilège* and Didot’s title of “imprimeur de Monsieur,” are indications that Ohsson’s book was published with the patronage of the French court. See Mansel, “The *Tableau général de l’Empire Othoman* as Symbol,” 79, 80–81. On Didot’s acquisition of this title, see Griffiths, *Prints for Books*, 127.

76 “il le faut avouer, nous n’avions guère cru les Turcs capables de s’adonner à l’Etude et aux Lettres: nous les avions même toujours regardés comme condamnés par la Loi de leur Prophète à un genre d’ignorance, dont ils n’auraient pas voulu se tirer. Aujourd’hui que chez nous mêmes les Lettres et la Philosophie ayant fait plus de progrès, nous ont accoutumés à voir les

choses sous un point de vue plus vrai, nous commençons à rougir de ce préjugé, et à nous convaincre que les Turcs, ainsi que les autres Nations Européennes sont en état de cultiver avec succès les Sciences et les Lettres.” BnF, Manuscrit français 22,015: Bureau de la Librairie, Censor’s report of September 8, 1788, register no. 1704.

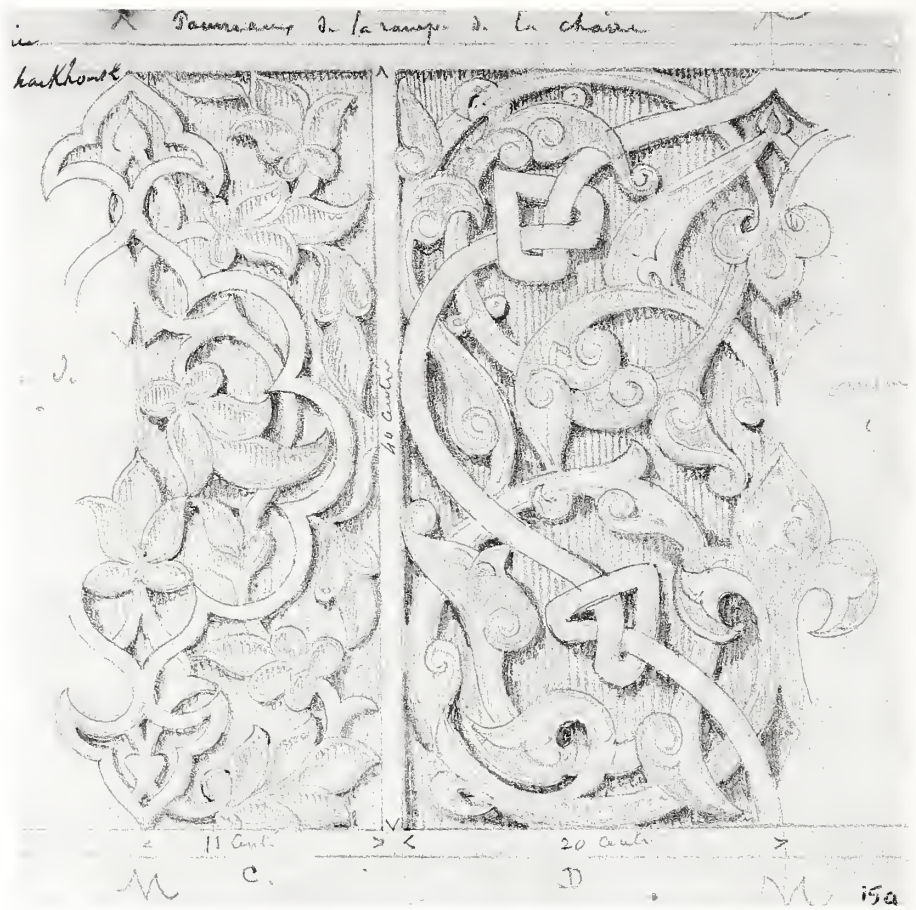
HISTORY OR THEORY?

French Antiquarianism, Cairene Architecture and Enlightenment Thinking

Abstract

The paper highlights the larger historical and cultural context in which French representations of Cairene architecture developed from the eighteenth century onward. It considers, on one hand, the general philosophies underlying the collections assembled by artist-travelers such as Louis-François Cassas or by Napoléon's scientists in charge of the *Description de l'Égypte* at the end of the eighteenth century and, on the other, the later theoretical frameworks developed by Gustave Le Bon and Jules Bourgoïn in the 1870s–80s. It discusses the endurance, well into the nineteenth century, of Enlightenment ways of looking at monuments in Cairo. The hypothesized persistence of Enlightenment thinking in the approaches to Cairene monuments developed by French antiquarians is examined in particular through three key aspects: sensitivity to political conditions, the tension between history and theory, and the lure of rational analysis.

RECENT SCHOLARSHIP has uncovered a dominant topos across much of French nineteenth-century antiquarian literature on Cairene monuments: the tripartite periodization of their artistic history into the sequences of “growth, maturity and decadence.”¹ This organic view of history was meant to emphasize the “Arab genius” of medieval times and to point out its extinction under Turkish rule. I will argue here that besides this marked common prejudice against Turks, other recurrent cognitive schemes can be identified within the French approach to Cairo's Islamic architecture from the late eighteenth century, in close connection with Enlightenment discussions and concerns. In concrete terms, this paper aims to bring to light the endurance, well into the nineteenth century, of patterns of thought and of ways of looking at architecture typical of what is known as the “Grand Siècle.” It will do so by considering in particular three key aspects of French Enlightenment culture and tracing their echoes in the surveys undertaken by antiquarians in Egypt. These features can be best summarized as: significant engagement with political criticism; lasting tension between grand theory and erudition; and finally, reliance on science.² Critical political thought is perceptible in many accounts and my assumption is that it colored the ways French antiquarians looked at the time at Middle Eastern architecture. This attitude followed an intellectual tradition established in the mid-eighteenth century that assessed historical architecture according to its political context, as we will see. The primacy of philosophy in French culture was another influential factor. Rather than being studied for themselves, Cairene monuments were enrolled by French architects, artists, and amateurs in a number of theoretical projects and broad generalizations. In the process, specific modes of visualization were used. Finally, the belief, equally strong in pre-

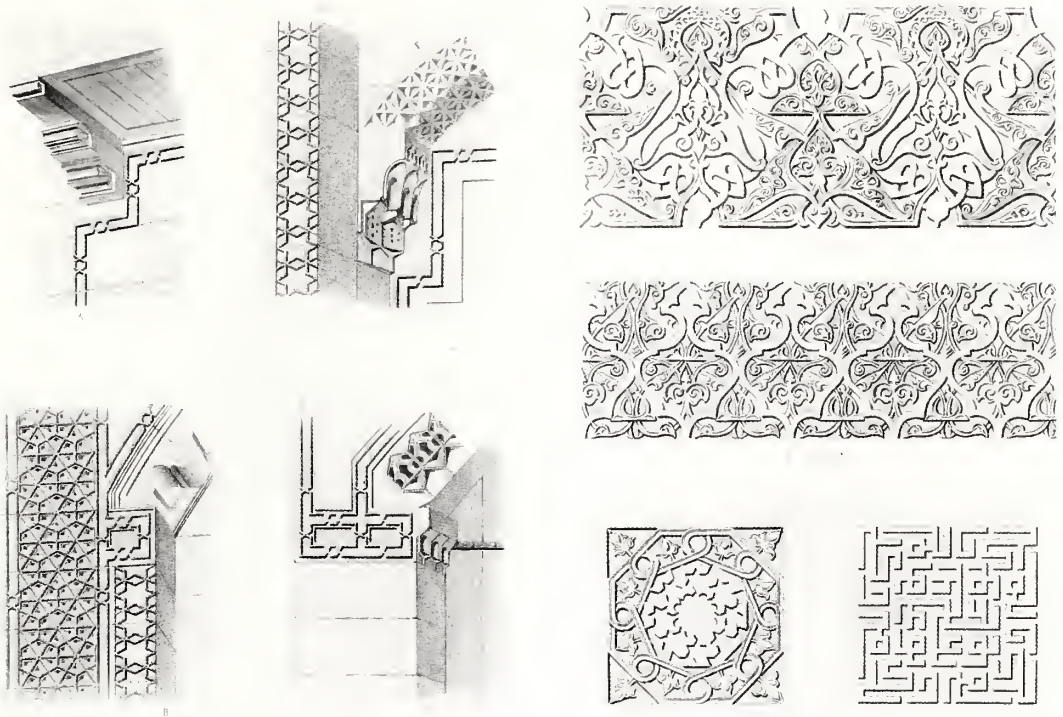


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1
Pascal-Xavier Coste, Untitled (detail from the *minbar* in the mosque of Sultan Barquq). Bibliothèque de l'Alcazar, Marseille, Fonds Pascal Coste, Ms 1309, fol. 15a. Photograph Bibliothèque de l'Alcazar

revolutionary France, that the entire universe was susceptible to rational analysis, most precisely in the language of mathematics, can be seen at work in some of the discourses produced. The combination of these factors may explain the ahistorical approach, and in many instances the limited documentary value, that characterizes many of the textual and visual narratives produced. It offers clues to elucidate why details (Fig. 1) outnumber by far complete views of the monuments or why captions to the plates published should lack precise references to space and time (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). It helps understand the process by which the (concrete) forms surveyed led eventually to the development of (abstract) “figures.” It is the task of this article to point out this striking feature of French imagery of Cairene monuments and to highlight its endurance. The focus placed on continuities between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is not meant to obliterate ruptures, however; some significant shifts did indeed occur and will be mentioned when appropriate.

The body of literature and imagery considered here includes the classical surveys of Cairene architecture, together with works by authors of lesser repute. The first group encompasses the grand folios and accompanying texts resulting from the Napoleonic expedition that were partly published in the *État moderne* section of the *Description de l'Égypte* from 1809 onward, as well as those by successive generations of amateurs: architect Pascal-Xavier Coste (1787–1879), archaeologist Émile Prisse d'Avennes (1807–1879), and scholar Jules Bourgoin (1838–1908). The second includes items such as the collection of drawings and models by artist Louis-François Cassas (1756–1827) or the essay produced by the social theorist



2

2
Jules Bourgoïn, *Entrée d'une maison au Caire*. Plate VII from Jules Bourgoïn, *Les arts arabes*. Paris: Morel, 1867–73, Architecture. Photograph INHA, Bibliothèque/collections Jacques Doucet

3

3
Jules Bourgoïn, *Reliefs sur pierre*. Plate 90 from Jules Bourgoïn, *Les arts arabes*. Paris: Morel, 1867–73, Claires-voies et details. Photograph INHA, Bibliothèque/collections Jacques Doucet

Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931). It is neither the purpose of this paper to scrutinize these ensembles one by one in order to assess their contribution to specialized knowledge, nor to examine them in isolation, as textual or visual evidence *per se*. Rather it looks at both the picturesque views, the technical drawings, and the discourses produced as a collection in context, as a construction shaped by wider forces and philosophies, beyond the encounters of individuals with specific elements of material culture in Egypt. In particular, it attempts to place the images and texts authored in relation to the ways both Middle Eastern cultures and historical architecture were envisioned in France at the time. Central to the point of view adopted is indeed the desire to delve into the intellectual processes that fashioned the conceptions of Cairo's monumental heritage put forward by these connoisseurs. In short, the written and visual material available is taken as “fragments,” rather than as “texts”—that is, as intellectual items inscribed into a wider frame—and a frame that evolved over time.³ In other words, it is not so much the content, nor the intertextuality (however momentous), of the writings and of the images that is at stake here, but rather their lasting ties to cultural and political issues that were raised during the so-called Age of Reason and that persisted during the following century. Among these, debates on tyranny and historical progress, discourses on human diversity, and attempts at “scientificizing” knowledge loomed large, as we shall see. Historicizing the way Cairene monuments were looked at and interpreted by French artists and antiquarians not only helps to identify lasting cognitive patterns among the narratives produced. Contextualizing their intellectual climate provides keys to texts that are more often than not ambiguous, misleading, and consequently hardly comprehensible to the present-day reader, as is the case, for instance, with the cryptic late writings of Jules Bourgoïn.

The Spectre of Despotism

A fundamental facet of French intellectual life and ethos during the Enlightenment had been the rejection of absolutism and the defense of political liberalism. Intertwined with it was the challenge to account for human diversity. The entangled issues led essayists to popularize the notion of “Oriental despotism” in French political culture. According to the stereotype (forged in Britain in the 1660s),⁴ the Ottoman sultan in particular embodied a form of power that was considered to rest mainly on fear and arbitrariness.⁵ A disguised critique of French monarchy, the standard construction of an abusive Ottoman regime was largely tinted by strictly European concerns.⁶ It was equally embedded in negative assessments of religion. At mid-century, environmental factors were brought to the forefront by Montesquieu in his influential *De l'esprit des lois* (1748) to explain political differences among nations, and to argue for an Eastern predisposition to despotism.⁷ The so-called theory of climates—a quite ancient scheme—ascribed qualities of “vitality” or “indolence” to populations according to the climatic conditions they lived in. The former was to be found in cold environments (i.e., European settings), the latter in torrid milieus (i.e., Asian lands). Varied reactions to despotism were seen as resulting consequently: resistance on one side, acceptance on the other. This geographical determinism was overtly refuted by Count Volney in his account of travels to Egypt and Syria written a few years before the French Revolution.⁸ A philosopher who would later join the *Idéologues* group,⁹ Volney believed deeply in human agency. Equipped with medical knowledge as well as proficiency in Arabic, he produced from his extended sojourn in the Middle East (from 1783 to 1785) a matter-of-fact depiction of the harsh social conditions prevailing in the region. The text voiced, in stark terms, the misery he observed during the journey. It presented Egypt as a country devastated by starvation and disease, not because of climatic causes, but because of political conditions: “All that is seen and heard, announces that one is in the country of slavery and tyranny.”¹⁰ As a religion associated with fatalism, Islam was seen as sustaining by default the absolutism of the Sublime Porte (the Ottoman court). Scholarship has shown that knowledge acquired through travel, in the case of Volney and his contemporaries, was not solely intended to propose new facts and speculations, but was also driven by engagement with the future.¹¹ It supported, in the writings of Volney, implicit demands for political freedom in order to counter the threat of despotism. Discourses on the necessary “emancipation” and “regeneration” of Middle Eastern societies multiplied during the first part of the nineteenth century in France. As has been well established, Volney’s essay proved to be a source of inspiration for the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt (1798–1801) and served to legitimate it.¹² According to Enlightenment and Revolutionary ideologies, France was destined to rescue

Egypt from what was considered the tyranny of Mamluk rule and to improve social conditions in the country.¹³

Volney's concern regarding the contemporary desolation of Egypt and the call for political "regeneration" had persistent echoes in the approach and prose of antiquarians themselves. A case in point is the work of Émile Prisse d'Avennes. An engineer by training, driven to the Middle East in the 1820s by his philhellenism, Prisse d'Avennes is among the very few Egyptologists who devoted attention not only to ancient, but also to medieval as well as modern, Egypt. His early interest was in the monuments of Upper Egypt, where he dug several sites from 1836 to 1844, bringing back to France the famous "Table of kings," as well as the papyrus to which his name is attached—the oldest (4,600 years) known manuscript in the world. He proceeded afterwards to survey medieval architecture in Cairo. Most of the drawings and squeezes required by the enterprise were executed during the years 1858–60, with the help of a few assistants. They resulted in a splendid album published a couple of years before his death in 1879,¹⁴ although his intention had been to release it for the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. The documentation assembled for the book was ample, as what has survived from his private papers demonstrates: it included not only his own sketches (some three hundred), but also squeezes, photographs (about 150), drawings by other artists, a series of press cuttings, and notes taken from many authors. The material gathered illustrates numerous aspects of Egyptian life and history, from ancient dynasties to Mamluk beys, from political organization to social institutions, from the objects of daily life to the condition of the monuments in the country.¹⁵ Aside from his archaeological work, Émile Prisse d'Avennes authored several pieces on current social conditions in the Nile Valley, based on first-hand observation. A good example, among others, is his remarkable 1847 ethnographic series on the harsh life and shanty housing of *Fellahin*;¹⁶ the wording is openly critical of the dynasty in power, while showing much empathy with Egyptian peasantry. Prisse d'Avennes is known to have been in sympathy with Saint-Simonian ideology (an elitist utopianism that advocated the fusion of East and West in order to regenerate both worlds, recruiting followers particularly among the technical professions and well represented among French engineers employed in Egypt); he held in his library a typical pamphlet of the time, which called for an "absolute, and complete, social revolution" in the Middle East in order to help the political emancipation of its peoples,¹⁷ as well as a copy of Volney's essay on Egypt and Syria.¹⁸ One cannot help but think that Prisse d'Avennes's political sensitivity may well have been what took him to study and reveal the architecture and artifacts, not only of the Pharaonic (and dead) past of the country, but of the living civilization of the "Modern Egyptians" as well.

Prisse d'Avennes's political and social concern was not an isolated case. Further evidence that long-time European residents in Egypt, who had lived there many years, had trouble accepting the human distress encountered locally exists in diaries and letters. Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832), the famous Egyptologist, recalls that after a decade in Egypt supervising huge civil works in the Delta implemented by way of forced labor, the architect Pascal-Xavier Coste, who himself published a masterpiece on Cairene monuments, abruptly fled the country in 1827 because he could no longer bear the treatment inflicted on his workers, who were dying by thousands on site because of starvation and disease.¹⁹ Whether the story is fact or fiction makes little difference; it does reveal, in any event, common French perceptions of social conditions in Egypt and what may have been the decisive drive behind the antiquarian study of medieval and contemporary Egypt—political commitment.

The catalogue of the Egyptian exhibition at the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle offers another instance of this phenomenon, a further expression of the theory of the Arab genius silenced by Turkish tyranny. It was written by Charles-Edmond Chojecki (1822–99) (under the pseudonym of Charles Edmond),²⁰ a Polish political refugee who had personally experienced Russian absolutism, as he recounted in an autobiographical novel.²¹ There can be little doubt that direct knowledge of absolute power, in Egypt or elsewhere, made one sensitive to the matter, and affected representations of society in corresponding countries. When discovering Istanbul for the first time, Chojecki's hero expressed mixed feelings: the urban scenery made a vibrant impression when seen from afar, but caused tremendous disappointment on a closer look that revealed so much misery in the streets.²² Such experience may well have been archetypal.

The concern for political causalities and impacts, perceived explicitly or implicitly in antiquarian literature related to Cairo, was not specific to surveys of Egyptian or Middle Eastern architecture. The idea that political contexts influenced the production of architectural forms had been originally expressed about Ancient Greek architecture. An early exponent of such a theory was Julien-David Leroy (1724–1803), the noted architect and member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts commonly known as David Le Roy. In his influential analysis of Greek monuments (1758),²³ Le Roy proposed to differentiate “between the buildings elevated by a *free people*, who by their power and their enlightenment gave laws to other peoples, and those buildings which they executed when, under the yoke of Romans, they had lost a part of the pride and the genius which had animated them.”²⁴ Thus he associated architectural perfection with political independence, and its decline with subjugation under despotic power. In his view, early Greek monuments (the architecture of liberty) were aesthetically superior to late Roman architecture in Greece (the



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 Gustave Le Bon, *Anciennes lampes en verre émaillé des mosquées du Caire*. Plate 10 from Gustave Le Bon, *La civilisation des Arabes*. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1884. Photograph http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/le_bon_gustave/civilisation_des_arabes/gravures/planches_couleurs_gif/planche_10.html

architecture of tyranny), mainly because of this political context.²⁵ It was not a matter of forms and shapes; it was a matter of ideology. Looking at historical monuments through political lenses was not reserved to architecture in Egypt and was to become a trope of French architectural theory throughout the nineteenth century.

Eventually, the racist theories developed under the auspices of the nascent discipline of anthropology at the end of the nineteenth century were to chase away political determinism in the assessment of culture in the Middle East, or at least to produce alternate narratives. The shift is well illustrated in the lavish album depicting the (lost) *Civilisation des Arabes* published in 1884 by Gustave Le Bon, the notorious essayist and future controversial theorist of crowd psychology. His book expressed a fervent admiration for “Arab” artistic achievements; it was in fact intended initially as a volume on Arab arts.²⁶ In Le Bon’s view, art represented the most accurate document that historians could possibly use: “in their tangible form, art works speak clearly to the mind ... They tell us with certitude what was the epoch which created them.”²⁷ The chromolithographic plates accompanying the text give in turn an idea of the Islamic artifacts that most impressed Le Bon. Plate 2 reproduces a watercolor, by Le Bon after his own photograph,²⁸ of one of the earliest objects transferred to the newly created museum of Arab art in Cairo: a celebrated Koran table, dated 1327–8, that had been found in the Hospital of Sultan Qalawun. Of copper alloy inlaid with silver, the object shows exquisite workmanship.²⁹ Plate 10 reveals the bright tones of three enameled mosque lamps with Mamluk blazons (Fig. 4). Together with delicate craftsmanship, color was a feature of Islamic art praised by Le Bon and contemporary amateurs. In his own words, “the true mark



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Gustave Le Bon, Untitled (weapons
in the Ambroise Baudry collection,
photographed in Cairo in 1882).
Centre de documentation du Musée
d'Orsay, Paris. Photograph Musée
d'Orsay/Patrice Schmidt

of Arab art was the imagination, the brightness, the luster, the exuberance of the ornamentation, the fantasy in every possible detail. A race of poets—and what poet is not indeed an artist—affluent enough to make all its dreams come true, was to give birth to such fabulous palaces, resembling laces of marble, inlaid with gold and precious stones. No people had possessed such marvels; no one ever will again.”³⁰ Among the photographs taken in Cairo by Le Bon are pictures of weapons from the collection of French architect and collector Ambroise Baudry (Fig. 5) that hint at an interest in the warrior culture of the Arabs.³¹

In contrast with former discourses, the essayist considered art an expression of race (and furthermore “heredity”), moment, place, and religion, rather than the result of political and social organization, whatever his admiration may have been for the institutions disseminated by the Arab Conquest over a large empire. He considered slavery positively, as well as legal polygamy. He declared in his book that “the situation of slaves in the East is superior to that of servants in Europe”; Muslim polygamy appeared to him more respectful to women than the “hypocrite polygamy” prevailing in Europe.³² Assumptions of this sort were neither completely new nor exceptional. Cautiousness toward judging Egyptian slavery can be found in the pages of the *Description de l'Égypte*. In the very words of one of Napoléon’s engineers, the young Gilbert de Chabrol, author of the chapter on the manners of modern Egyptians: “The peoples of the East have kept the ancient custom of using slaves for their service. We will refrain from any painful reflection in this respect: however legitimate, our reproaches may fall on Europe and each of them would be a bitter criticism of the shameful trade that it has tolerated so far: the colonies of the New World and the islands of the African sea, as scenes of the barbarity of the civilized peoples, offer the spectacle of a most odious slavery, [...] the fate of slaves in Egypt,

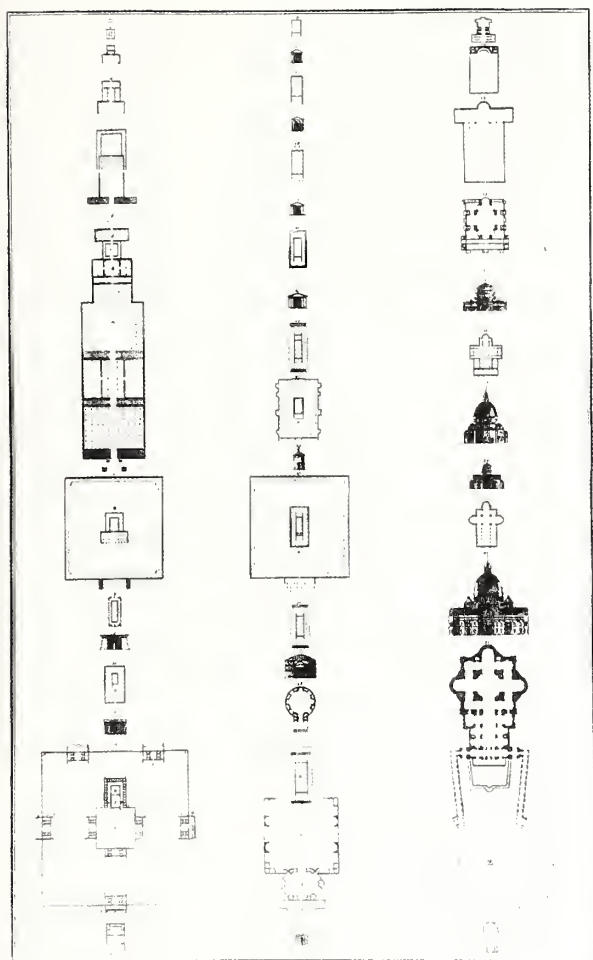
as in other countries of the Levant, is much less to be pitied than that of the slaves in America.”³³ Similarly, the idea that a “practical polygamy” existed in Europe had already been expressed by the Scottish diplomat David Urquhart in his *Spirit of the East* (1838).³⁴ What was new in Le Bon’s text was the emphasis on biological determinism. This posture echoed directly the philosophy of art instituted by Johann Joachim Winckelmann and developed particularly in France by the scholar Hippolyte Taine around the trilogy of “race, moment and milieu,” a doctrine that had acquired a considerable audience in French artistic and architectural circles by the 1870s.³⁵ Furthermore, Le Bon departed from earlier commentators by not believing in universal axioms. According to him, “If freedom is excellent for certain races, the harsh law of a master is preferable for others.”³⁶ His relativism prompted him to define the political regime of the Arabs as “in fact a democratic regime under an absolute master.” In any case, he acknowledged Arab advancement in all fields of art and science during the Middle Ages thanks to an openness to innovation (rather than the reproduction of established patterns) and the strength of warrior culture (perhaps echoing his interest in weapons). These qualities were manifest in the magnificence of their artifacts and architecture. He considered that such traits were gone long since, however, and affirmed that “at about the time of the Renaissance, the Arabs [had] disappeared from history.”³⁷ The ode to Arab civilization was one to a culture that had ceased to exist long ago in Le Bon’s view, due to the Ottoman conquest; however, the blame was now placed on the “biological hybridization” that resulted from it, rather than on political despotism. In the conclusion of his book, Le Bon harshly writes: “It has been claimed that the future belongs to cross-breds. It may well be. For people who intend to keep their rank in the world, it is undesirable.”³⁸

History or Theory?

Equally decisive and enduring was the persistent tension between speculative thinking and detailed surveying at work in much French writing on Cairo’s monuments. More often than not, authors seemed to be oscillating between grand theory and minute erudition. Since the early modern period, generalization had been at the very core of scientific activity and knowledge in France, in all branches of study. The ultimate goal of the observation of the world was to reach universal axioms; locality and particularity had to be skipped in order to do so. In Enlightenment antiquarian literature, the tension between describing particular facts and establishing general rules led scholars to develop a dual approach to the study of ancient architecture. David Le Roy’s work on Greek ruins again provides a convenient example.³⁹ His double approach included history and theory. The “historical” considered architecture as a human product, the “theoretical” envisioned buildings as material artifacts

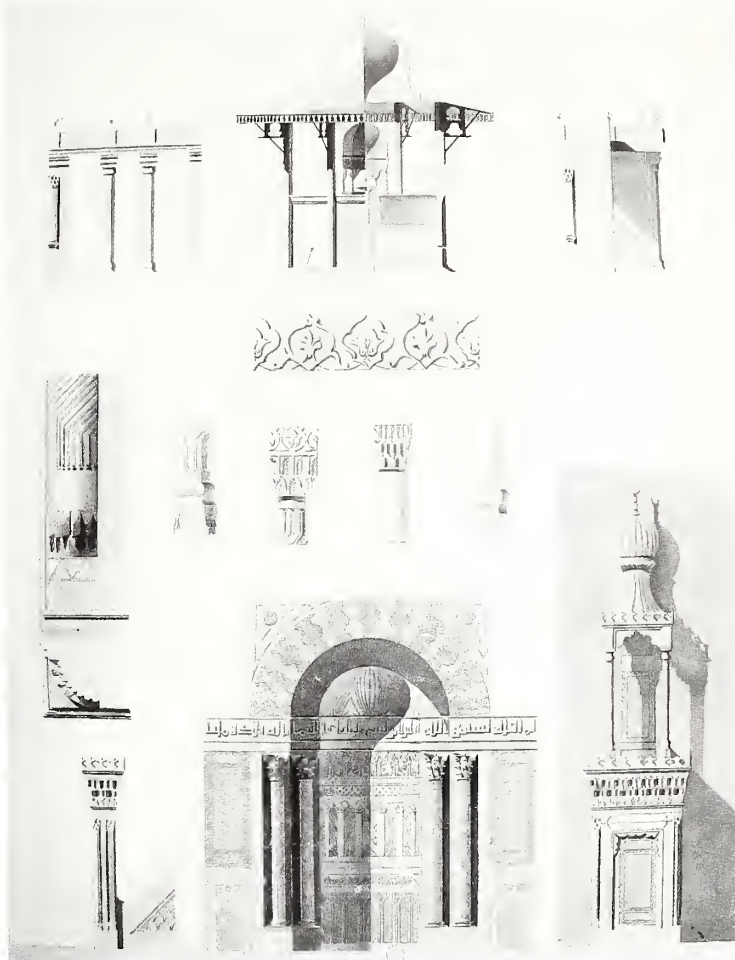
governed by abstract universal principles. While “history” could help understand how mankind interacted with a specific context to produce specific forms, “theory” could question the interaction of mankind with universal laws and its formal results regardless of specific context. Both approaches encompassed distinct representational modes, the former primarily textual discourse, the latter graphical expression, for example, juxtaposing plans of similar buildings of different times and places in order to give a sense of progression (Fig. 6). The full title of Le Roy’s publication suggests the theoretical agenda of his study of Greek monuments: “the progress of architecture.”⁴⁰ A climax in the development of all-embracing theories would eventually be reached with Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc’s systematic rationalizing of the art of building in the 1860s and his attempt to write a world history of architecture. Obsessed with race (particularly the “Aryan race”), Viollet-le-Duc sought to explain any development of the human dwelling through ethnic causalities in one of his later works, *L’Histoire de l’habitation humaine* (1875).⁴¹ The project led him to elaborate what has been termed as a “delirious system,” that is, a rigid theory (based on race) that had to be sustained at all costs, against all opposition.⁴²

In view of this established epistemological background, the impressive amount of visual and textual data collected by Napoléon’s artists and scientists during the brief occupation of Egypt at the very end of the eighteenth century is in fact quite paradoxical, as has been convincingly argued elsewhere.⁴³ To be sure, this monumental work, by its encyclopedic nature, is perfectly in line with the vogue for surveys in pre-revolutionary France, but the knowledge gathered is at the same time a true anticipation of much later developments in the field of what would come to be known as “area studies.” It predates by almost three decades forms of specialized knowledge and fieldwork that would gain momentum from the Romantic Age onward. Rather than offering room for broad generalizations, as an Enlightened and somehow Gallic “esprit de système” would have done, the *État moderne* section of the *Description de l’Égypte* sticks to recording facts, names, measurements. It supplies city plans, painstakingly surveyed at a scale of about 1:2000, with extensive numbering of buildings. More than 1,200 structures are numbered on the map of Cairo; in the map key they are arranged as forty-four architectural types, from *qasr* (palace) to *manzal* (house), *gâmi*’ (mosque) to *madfan* (tomb), *masna*’ (factory) to *khammâra* (cabaret); 1,300 toponyms in Arabic, with their transliteration in Latin script, are listed. Minutely detailed drawings of mosques (Fig. 7), houses, baths, and caravanserais are provided. The factual material abounds, in an attempt to produce an accurate and comprehensive picture of the architectural heritage of medieval Cairo, a city, we are told, that featured “203 mosques, 158 smaller sanctuaries, 45 hammams,” and many mansions “combining all the types of pleasure and luxury that the Egyptian climate can admit”—a rare qualitative observation in an



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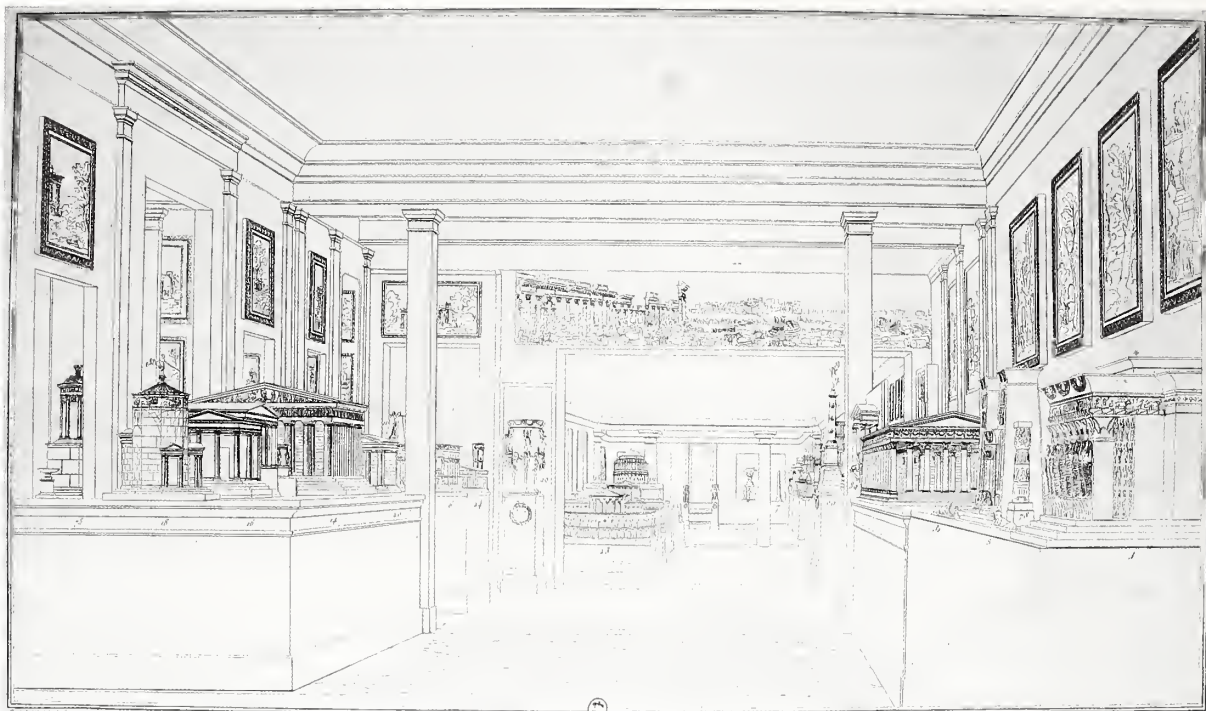
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Jules-David Leroy, *Suite de temples selon l'ordre le plus propre à faire voir leurs différents degrés d'accroissement et de perfection*. Plate 1 from Jules-David Leroy, *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce considérés du côté de l'histoire et du côté de l'architecture*, vol. 1. Paris: Louis-François Delatour, 1770. Photograph INHA, Bibliothèque/collections Jacques Doucet



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Jean-Constantin Protain, Original drawing for *Le Kaire, mosquée de Soultan Hassan*. Plate 1 from *Description de l'Égypte, État moderne*, vol. 1. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Estampes, Albums de la campagne d'Égypte, Tome 1bis, État moderne, pl. 36. Photograph BnF

otherwise rather dry narrative.⁴⁴ This innovative and impressive source of knowledge on contemporary Cairo was the direct outcome of military occupation; ironically enough, it remained underused, due in particular to a long delay in its public release. It stands now as a true statistical oddity within the overall production of knowledge on Cairo and its architecture, although it obviously influenced later surveys.⁴⁵ Prisse d'Avennes's studies share, to a large extent, a similar approach to architecture in Egypt, concerned as they are with accuracy and context. His depiction of monuments shows immense erudition on all aspects of the history and ethnography of the country. He was equally at ease with the gods and goddesses of the Egyptian pantheon, the succession of Mamluk rulers in medieval times and their blazons, or the organization of space in Cairene domestic architecture. For Prisse d'Avennes, as well as for Napoléon's scientists, the interest in Cairene monuments was driven by a curiosity about anything Egyptian. This was not the case of all scholars or connoisseurs who surveyed Cairene architecture. The geographical scope of the surveys, combined with their final goal (fundamental versus applied knowledge, for instance) and the corresponding way of looking (archeological, architectural, artistic, etc.), in fact define significant divisions among the views developed on Cairene architecture. While some antiquarians studied the monuments of the Egyptian capital for the sake of producing empirical knowledge on Egypt, others had larger enterprises in mind, be they devoted to conceptualizing



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Louis-François Cassas, *Vue générale de la Galerie des chefs-d'œuvre de l'architecture des différents peuples*, undated. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Estampes, Cassas, série non reliée. Photograph BnF

Near Eastern architecture, the architecture of the Islamic world at large, or even world architecture.

The work of Louis-François Cassas falls in this last category. The artist toured the Near East in 1784–5 at the expense of the Count de Choiseul-Gouffier, a French diplomat and antiquarian interested in promoting the architectural heritage of ancient Greece. Although travelling in the region proved an adventure (he had to survive a Bedouin attack and a robbery to reach Palmyra),⁴⁶ Cassas managed to visit a number of archaeological sites and to bring back hundreds of drawings. In Egypt, where he spent a couple of weeks on his way to Palestine in March 1785 and at the end of his journey in November of the same year, he mainly sketched (besides the pyramids) monuments and street scenes in Alexandria and Cairo, devoting attention to Islamic architecture.⁴⁷ Many of the drawings were never published. Thirteen watercolors of Alexandria, together with an album devoted to Egypt, are listed among the large collection of Cassas's drawings and etchings that was auctioned in Paris in 1878.⁴⁸ Although the artist worked at his *Voyage pittoresque de la Syrie, de la Phœnicie, de la Palæstine et de la Basse-Égypte* (sic) for about ten years, it was never completed. Only two thirds of the plates were engraved and the historical introduction by Volney, whom Cassas had met and befriended in Jaffa, was never written. In its unfinished form, the portfolio stands as a collection of loose material, where picturesque views coexist with architectonic reconstructions. Initially trained as a technical draftsman and known as a “painter-architect,” Cassas drew architecture with ease. His concern with tangible culture drove him not only to portray the monuments and landscapes discovered in Egypt, but also to create imaginative reconstructions, as his *Restauration d'une Pyramide avec ses avenues*, engraved in 1795, amply demonstrates. An archaeological exercise in the manner that would later be strictly codified by the Parisian École des Beaux-Arts, and was then labeled an “idée,” the plate features an invented pyramid with two lateral obelisks, preceded

by a temple and an alley of sphinxes.⁴⁹ The fantasy scenery belongs to utopian imagery, as well as to the iconography of freemasonry; Cassas is known to have been a Mason during his long stay in Rome, while working at his book.

It is telling that the project that Cassas did bring to fruition out of his travels in the Near East was a "Museum of Architecture." Located in a gallery the artist had acquired in Paris, in the rue de Seine, on the Left Bank, this display of models executed partly in cork at a scale of about 1:30 was intended to present a world history of ancient architecture; it consisted of seventy-six monuments from Greece, Italy, Egypt, India, Iran, and Palestine, among others (Fig. 8). Needless to say, the models represented "restorations" of the sort just mentioned, that is, reconstructions of what the monuments should have looked like when built; the present state of the buildings was presented by etchings hanging behind the models. The project of a museum had been contemplated by Cassas from as early as 1786, it seems,⁵⁰ which would make him an absolute pioneer in the field (the first gallery of architectural models is considered to be the one created by Le Roy in the Louvre in 1794–5).⁵¹ Further insights on the enterprise can be gained from the catalogue of the collection published in 1806.⁵² The promotion of architecture was its primary goal, as can be inferred from the opening paragraph of the book: "Architecture, so honored in ancient times, [...], still considered today in Italy, is not properly valued in France."⁵³ Cassas's stated agenda was educational: to instruct cultured people in the art of architecture of all nations. It was also, to be sure, commercial: a fee was charged to visit the gallery, which was eventually bought by the State in 1813 and exhibited for some time at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The collection, now lost, was organized by genre, along an historic progression: Egyptian, Indian, Persian, Greek, Etruscan, Cyclopean, Celtic, Roman, and Late Empire. Chinese architecture was considered too well known to be included. Rather than properly encyclopedic, the collection was a selection of examples of ancient architecture, chosen deliberately from among the lesser-known productions of antiquity rather than from among its icons. What mattered to Cassas was to make perceptible to the public formal similarities across countries and cultures. Indian mausoleums, for instance, reminded him somehow of Cairene mosques; he is said to have intended to develop through new models the connections between "Indian," "Persian," and "Arab" architecture. He also analyzed "late empire" (i.e., medieval) architecture as a mix of "Arab," "Moorish," "Saracenic," and Norman art.⁵⁴ Affinities and correspondences, dissemination and exchange, were his central concerns, more than specific locales. These broader views on world architecture clearly differentiate Cassas's project from the scholarly and focused endeavor of Napoléon's scientists.

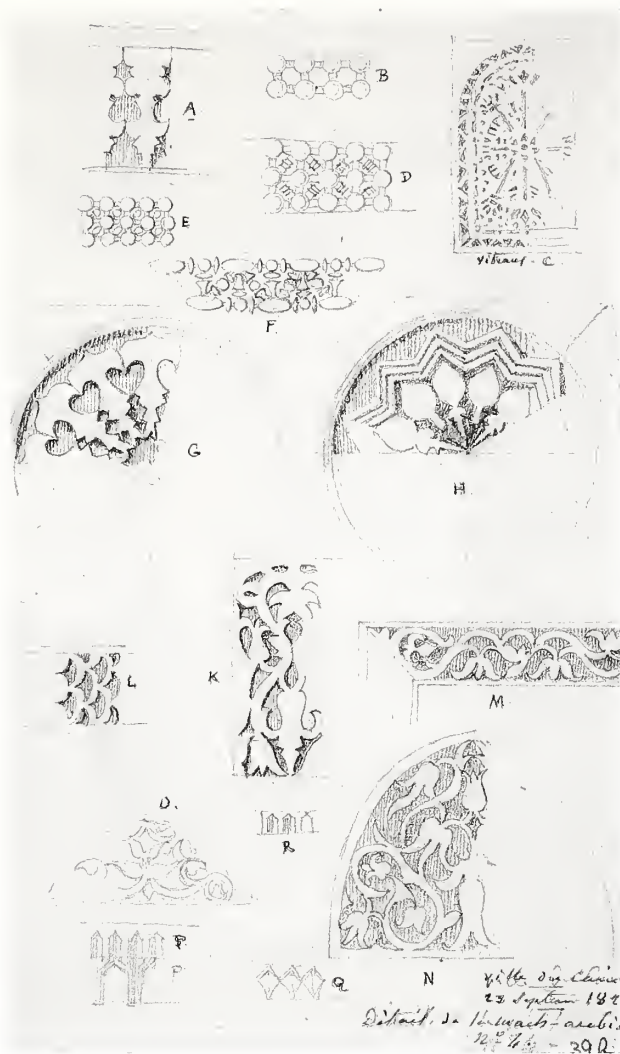
A further distinction between the two surveys is provided by the issue of architectural style. The presentation of Cassas's museum explicitly stated that the pur-

pose of the collection was to display “the most noble, or the less-known forms, that could be happily applied to our monuments.”⁵⁵ The clear intention was to renew the range of historical models made available to designers. As if in counter-argument to such a declaration, an author of the Napoleonic survey, while insisting on the need to study the ancient “architecture of the Arabs,” claimed not to be recommending its imitation but instead to be adding a chapter to the history of architecture.⁵⁶ Bluntly put, his ultimate goal was the progress of knowledge, not architectural innovation or design.

Pascal-Xavier Coste’s enquiry shares some features with Cassas’s approach, although his grand album, *Architecture arabe ou monuments du Caire* (1847–9), clearly referred to a particular geography. But his too was a project of larger scope: to record all forms of Egyptian architecture, from ancient to modern, from monumental to vernacular, besides ethnographic types, costumes, and so on, as is testified by the 1,076 drawings he brought back from the years spent in Egypt in the late 1810s and early 1820s (Fig. 9).⁵⁷ Coste had been commissioned to build two mosques by the Egyptian ruler Muhammad ‘Ali in 1822 and argued that he needed to study carefully mosque architecture in the country in order to produce proper designs. The idea of applied knowledge was present here, too, and it was more than mere rhetoric. Stylistic exchanges were another significant concern of Coste’s study. The “theoretical” question envisioned in this instance was the relationship between Gothic and Middle Eastern architecture. The conclusion of the historical introduction to the plates clearly posited that “Gothic architecture originated from Arab architecture.” It was indeed this aspect that the publisher chose to underline when advertising the volume: “The influence exerted by these beautiful buildings of Egypt under the Caliphates had been very important on medieval architecture in Spain, France, England and Germany, which is known as Gothic, although it is rather an imitation of Arab [architecture]. The present volume sheds light on many important points in art history.”⁵⁸ In other words, distinctive conceptual frameworks differentiate one survey from another: while some were driven by the objective of pursuing fundamental knowledge, others were oriented by design concerns and/or by the desire to develop some theory about architecture or artistic interactions.

“The Mathematisation of Knowledge”

Three decades later, ironically, Coste’s questioning had become barely noticeable. Not because the quarrel over the origins of the Gothic style had been resolved, in favor of the French origin of Gothic,⁵⁹ but because the conceptual framework of Coste’s survey was no longer perceptible to the contemporary reader or indeed was deemed insufficiently “scientific.” In a review of French works on “oriental art” written in 1868, Viollet-le-Duc praised the talent of the draftsman but typi-



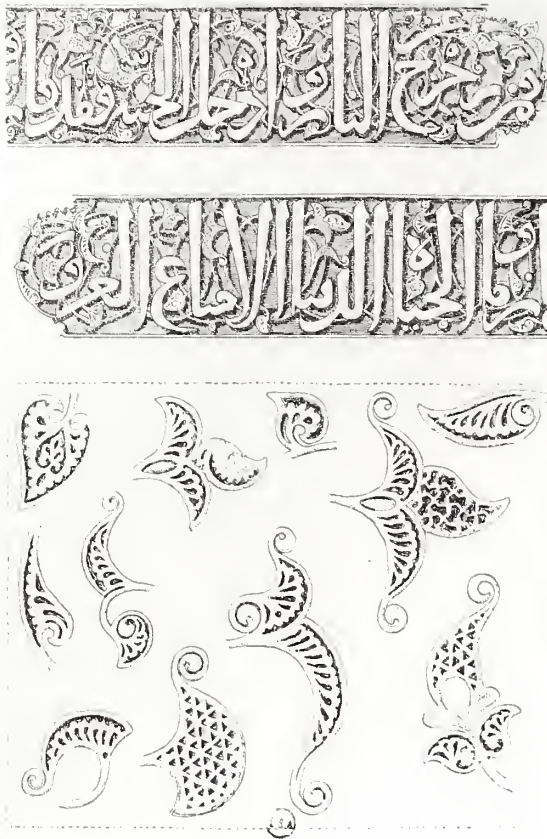
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Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Détail de la moucharabia n° 4, Ville du Caire*, 22 septembre 1822. Bibliothèque de l'Alcazar, Marseille, Fonds Pascal Coste, Ms 1311, fol. 39b. Photograph Bibliothèque de l'Alcazar

cally considered Coste's approach as too little "critical." In the view of the renowned leader of the rationalist school, an artist with ambition would have launched some theories on art, paid attention to causes and consequences, elaborated deductions from the material gathered, provoked discussions on the matter of his survey, instead of solely offering drawings with short historical descriptions, as Coste, and others before him, had. In brief, architectural literature needed to adopt "scientific criticism," with the capacity to deduce "vast consequences" from the most modest observation.⁶⁰

This much sought-after critical approach is exactly what Jules Bourgoïn's work could provide, according to Viollet-le-Duc in the same review of 1868. The young architect had just released the first plates of his book *Les arts arabes*. The lavish chromolithograph images recorded architectural details (woodwork, marble pavements, decorated ceilings, colored windows, etc.) surveyed during a three-year stay in the Middle East, and mainly taken from buildings in Cairo, besides a few examples from Jerusalem and Damascus. In 1863, after studying architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Bourgoïn had been offered the opportunity to supervise architectural works at the French consulate in Alexandria. The sojourn proved crucial at two levels. It allowed Bourgoïn to become deeply acquainted with an "art so



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Jules Bourgoïn, *Écritures*. Plate XLVIII from Jules Bourgoïn, *Précis de l'art arabe et matériaux pour servir à la théorie et à la technique des arts de l'Orient musulman* (*Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire*). Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890. Photograph INHA, Bibliothèque/collections Jacques Doucet

11
Jules Bourgoïn, *Untitled* (ornamental leaves). École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, EBA 7901-0041. Photograph École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts

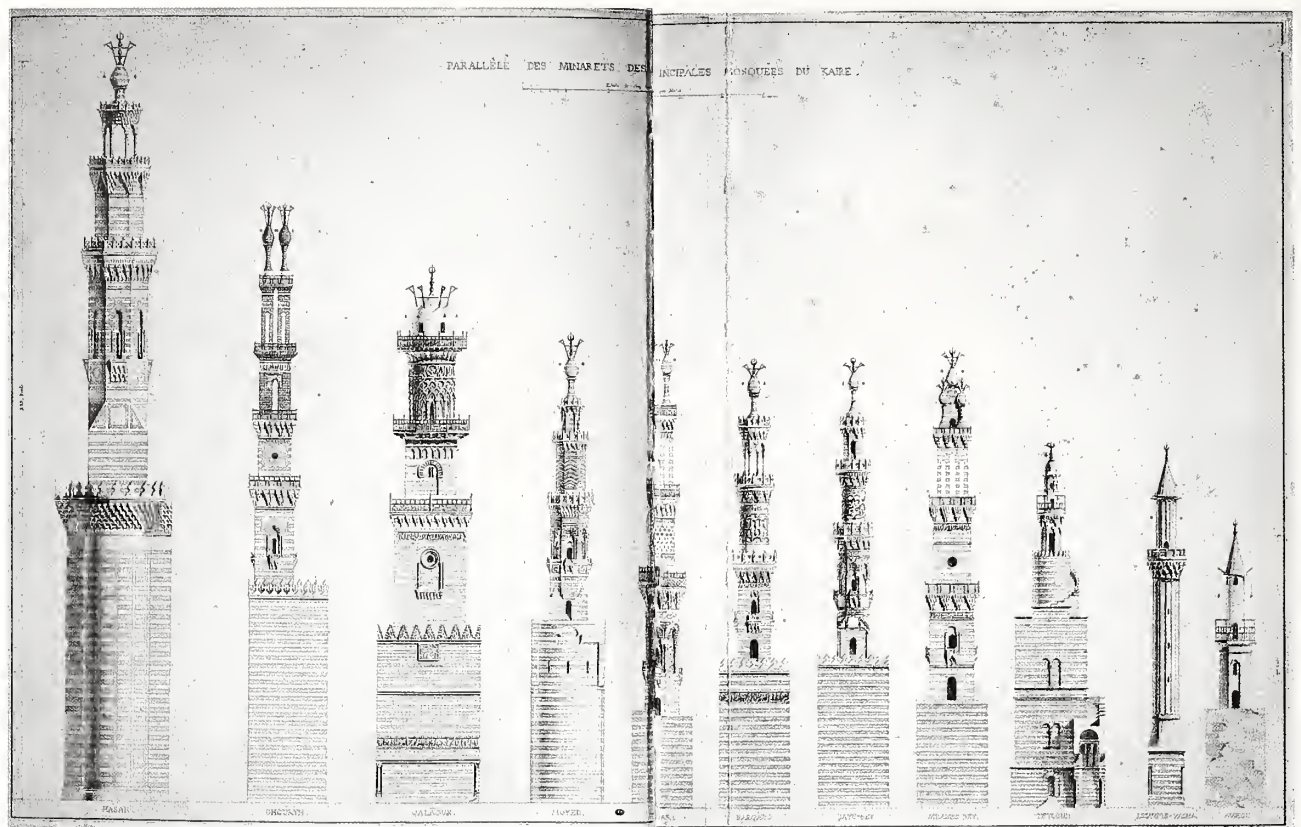
different from ours, and even from all others” and to observe at length its historical expressions as well as the techniques still commonly employed by contemporary craftsmanship. Such experience also allowed him to retrieve the “Arab methods of designing,” and in particular the geometrical rules ordering the decorative patterns used in Islamic architecture. Hence the positive appraisal from Viollet-le-Duc.

Bourgoïn’s first encounter with Arab art was so intense that it led him to abandon his profession in order to devote himself entirely to an “irresistible vocation”: the “scientific study of ornament and the applied arts” in comparative perspective, as he was to recall in 1891 in a long letter attempting to explain the course of his intellectual endeavor. His intention had been to apply the “methods of the modern scientific spirit” to his pursuit, emulating what had been done previously with success in the fields of natural and historical sciences. He claimed to be able to do so thanks to his taste for, and knowledge of, mathematics.⁶¹ His initial purpose was to trace differences according to “races” and “societies” (occasionally and interchangeably labeled “civilizations” in his writings), and in order to do so, he spent further time in the Middle East, in 1874–5 (mainly in Damascus) and again in 1881–4 (mainly in Cairo and in Upper Egypt). With time, his aim shifted drastically. Exploring the autonomous and universal language of ornament became his central goal.⁶² Bourgoïn later acknowledged as instrumental in this his discovery, at an early stage, of the writings of the philosopher and mathematician Augustin Cournot (1801–77), a major intellectual figure of his time. Cournot’s reflections on language, script, and forms of abstraction induced him to sense that architecture, ornament, and the applied arts contained “an internal principle of coordination,

a supreme reason that justified their specific, special and autonomous constitution.”⁶³ In short, forms originated in a “sphere of abstractions” superior to geometry and arithmetic. They were part of a “language and science of figures,” and could be studied as “figurative notes,” regardless of context. For the following decade, Bourgoin was engaged in establishing a new science, namely the “Graphique” or “science of the figurative script.” A plate from his *Précis de l’art arabe* (1892) encapsulates his new concern. The illustration, entitled “Scriptures” (Fig. 10), depicts a stucco inscription in the mosque of the Mamluk emir Sanjar al-Jawli (built 1303/4), with a deconstruction of the decorative floral pattern into a number of isolated “signs.” His papers contain numerous folios of serial, isolated motifs (Fig. 11), that were most probably meant to help him build and support his theory about the language of graphics. The ultimate result of his lifetime quest was three arid volumes of thousands of basic geometrical forms, which in combination could be used to construct any kind of figure; they were introduced by a rather obscure text filled with neologisms and mathematical equations.⁶⁴

The approach to (Islamic) ornament developed by Jules Bourgoin thus definitively departed from the anthropological theories that had stimulated many French architects and art historians from the mid-nineteenth century, following Taine’s theories on race, milieu and moment. A quotation from an unidentified author copied in one of Bourgoin’s notebooks explicitly illustrates the shift: “The strong influence which acts on the succession of forms, in music as elsewhere, is neither that of ‘Race,’ nor that of ‘Milieu’ or of ‘Moment,’ it is the influence of the works on other works.”⁶⁵ Art had taken precedence over society and culture in the essentialist theory worked out by Bourgoin.

The nature of his quest was typical of what has been termed as the “mathematisation of knowledge”⁶⁶ or “esprit de géométrie”⁶⁷ to describe a decisive aspect of Enlightenment thought: the belief that most realities could be reduced to numbers and mathematical axioms, in order to produce a renovated knowledge of universal significance. Specialist scholars of eighteenth-century thought have stressed that “Mathematical procedure became, so to speak, the ritual of Enlightenment thinking.”⁶⁸ Bourgoin’s mathematical speculations on Islamic patterns in the 1890s provide an instance of the endurance of this kind of thinking in the domain of art and architecture well beyond the eighteenth century. His scholarship is, moreover, an eloquent example of the fascination exerted by the “linguistic model” in the field of arts and humanities from 1850 onward. In art, many pioneers of abstraction explicitly compared what they were looking for to a language, and embarked upon establishing grammars—consisting of an “alphabet,” a “syntax,” and at times a “semantic”—of artistic elements, be they “color,” “drawing,” or “decorative arts.” The *Grammar of Ornament* (1856) by Owen Jones stands out as the most famous



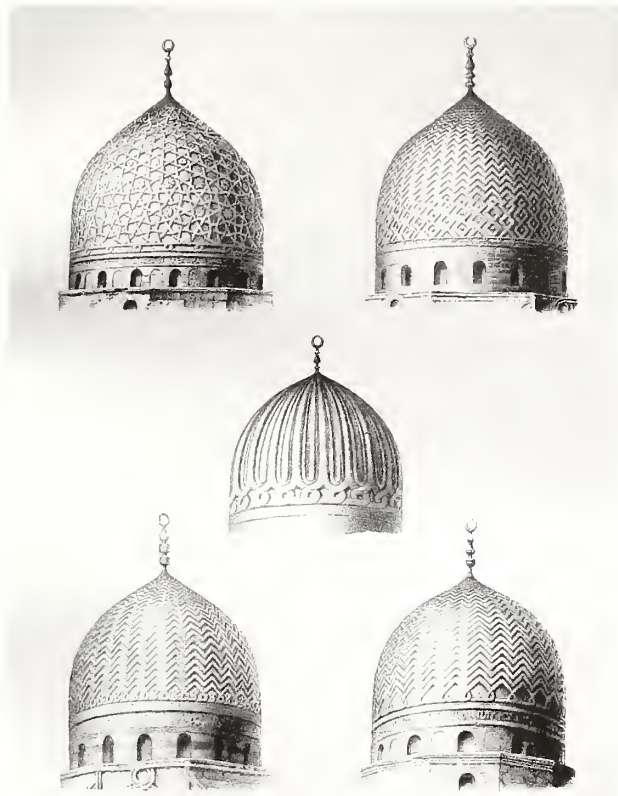
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12
Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Parallèle des minarets des principales mosquées du Kaire*, 1835. Watercolor. Paris, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, EBA 1995. Photograph École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts

example in English and was even made available to a French audience through a translation published in London in 1865, but apparently little known in the Continent. In any event, Bourgoïn has been recognized in this context as one of those who exploited in the most complete manner the model of verbal language, using a scientific analytical method that was aimed explicitly at producing abstractions, based on a distinction between (abstract) figure and (concrete) shape. Together with symbolism, Bourgoïn's work is known to have nurtured Kandinsky's manifesto of abstraction written in 1910.⁶⁹ Interestingly enough, his principal and enduring audience was within circles that had no connection with, nor interest in, the Middle East, as references to his theories in the writings of architects Gustave Umbdenstock (1866–1940) or André Lurçat (1894–1970), both architecture teachers at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, suggest.⁷⁰ Bourgoïn was both the heir of Enlightenment reasoning, and a precursor of abstraction—but definitely not a scholar of Islamic architecture in the current sense of the word, despite the many years he spent observing and surveying monuments in Egypt and in Syria.

An Offspring of the Philosophical Tradition?

Most French encounters with Egyptian "Arab art" (as it was termed at the time) from the end of the eighteenth century were driven by agendas and concerns—from political criticism to applied knowledge—that led the resulting accounts far away from the mere historical study of Cairo's architectural heritage. Taking as their point of departure Cairene monuments, many studies reached maturation in distant lands, from a "Museum of World Architecture" (in the case of Cassas) to the establishing of a new science of signs (as with Bourgoïn). The phenomenon is still alive today.⁷¹ In the



13

13

Émile Prisse d'Avennes, *Parallèle de dômes*. Plate XLII from Émile Prisse d'Avennes, *L'art arabe d'après les monuments du Kaire depuis le VII^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*. Paris: A. Morel et Cie, 1869–77. Photograph BnF

process, the graphical evidence presented in the albums tended to be detached from its historical and geographical context. Details taken from the monuments tended to outnumber full views of the buildings, as can be observed in most published plates, as well as in unpublished material, and in many instances, the name and location of the specific building to which they belong are even missing. There are parallels in late eighteenth-century British antiquarianism: Thomas Hope's sketchbooks of his 1796–7 journey to the Middle East do include sheets with architectural details and very vague locations,⁷² but the practice seems more enduring in France. Captions in French works were rarely archaeology-friendly; they depicted types and genres ("stalactites," "arcatures," "capitals," "private houses," etc.), and moreover series of them, rather than contextualized objects (the gate or palace of so and so). Formal comparisons across a range of monuments seemed to matter more than particular details about their historical and geographical settings. Coste, Prisse d'Avennes, and Bourgoïn all produced plates of "Parallèles" (Fig. 12 and Fig. 13), placing elements drawn to the same scale on a single plate in order to sense formal progressions; the method represented another enduring legacy of the eighteenth century. Invented by David Le Roy, it was systematized by Jean-Baptiste Seroux d'Agincourt in his monumental *Histoire de l'art par les monumens* (1810–23),⁷³ and remained a common tool to analyze architecture throughout the nineteenth century. In such an approach, the emphasis was placed on morphological progression across the centuries rather than on individual monuments. Finally, Islamic art amateurs more often than not saw "pure ornament" in the monuments they visited and delineated, rather than the material culture of a given society, a point made in a recent exhibition.⁷⁴ No wonder that the illustrated surveys that they produced became source-books for the

applied arts back home,⁷⁵ rather than milestones in the genesis and growth of the historiography of Islamic art and archaeology.

To some extent, the “abstracting” process applied to Cairene architecture can be viewed as deeply embedded in French culture: after all, Cartesianism, as opposed to the tradition of empiricism, was a major legacy of the Enlightenment in France and philosophy at large long maintained an eminent position in the hierarchy of disciplines. Eighteenth-century Paris has been termed the “capital of philosophy.”⁷⁶ This *episteme* decisively impacted the writing of history. While historical science developed in Germany on the basis of erudition, “speculation” represented a strong characteristic of the French historiographical school from the eighteenth century onward. In pre-revolutionary France, it was common to speak of “philosophical history,” that is, history with a philosophical twist or target. Volney’s second book resulting from his grand tour in the Middle East can best illustrate it. Set in the ruins of Palmyra, the historical narrative considers archaeological remains first in the concrete sense of derelict monuments, then in a figurative sense in order to speculate on the decline of civilizations, and finally in an abstract sense, as a phenomenon relevant to any human being or situation.⁷⁷ In any case, the “abstracting mind” of French antiquarians was to find in the profusion of geometrical and non-figurative ornamentation offered by Cairene architecture, and by that of other Middle Eastern locales, the most fertile grounds for their intellectual ventures. And it may well be that it was in fact the combination of both realities, the philosophical tradition encountering the realm of abstract ornament, that ultimately shaped the French theories and conceptualizations developed from Cairene monuments. As with any relationship, the dialectical dimension, if difficult to reconstruct and assess, is worth bearing in mind.

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NOTES

I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers of this paper for their valuable comments and suggestions for clarifying the points made; and of course the editors of the volume for inviting me to participate in it. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

- 1 Heghnar Watenpugh, "An Uneasy Historiography: The Legacy of Ottoman Architecture in the Former Arab Provinces", *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 27–50 (at 30); see also in the same volume Gülru Necipoğlu's contribution, "Creation of a National Genius: Sinan and the Historiography of "Classical" Ottoman Architecture," 141–83.
- 2 Monique Cottret, *Culture et politique dans la France des Lumières: 1715–1792* (Paris: Colin, 2002).
- 3 For a similar approach regarding European travelers' views of North Africa, see Ann Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment: Western Attitudes towards the Maghreb in the 18th Century* (Leyden: Brill, 1987), 7.
- 4 Ann Thomson, "L'Europe des Lumières et le monde musulman, une altérité ambiguë," *Cromohs* 10 (2005): 1–11.
- 5 The standard reference on the topic, and on its psychoanalytical dimensions, is Alain Grosrichard, *Structure du serial: la fiction du despotisme asiatique dans l'Occident classique* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), trans. Liz Heron as *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East* (London and New York: Verso, 1998).
- 6 Thomas Kaiser, "The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture," *Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 1 (March 2000): 6–34.
- 7 Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, *L'esprit des loix* (Geneva: Barrillot et fils, 1748), Livre XIV ("Des loix, dans le rapport qu'elles ont avec la nature du climat"), chap. I and X passim.
- 8 Constantin-François de Chasseboeuf comte de Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte, pendant les années 1783, 1784 et 1785* (Paris: Volland, Desenne, 1787), 418–55.
- 9 A group of writers, philosophers, historians, and physicians who, continuing the tradition of the Encyclopédistes, pursued the quest for a scientific model of social organization and political governance in the early nineteenth century and had a notable impact on Saint-Simonism and positivism in the following decades.
- 10 "Tout ce que l'on voit ou que l'on entend, annonce qu'on est dans le pays de l'esclavage et de la tyrannie". Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte*, 174.
- 11 Nicole Hafid-Martin, *Voyage et connaissance au tournant des Lumières (1780–1820)* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1995), 101.
- 12 Henry Laurens, *Les origines intellectuelles de l'expédition d'Égypte: L'orientalisme islamisant en France (1698–1798)* (Istanbul: Isis, 1987).
- 13 For the latest assessment, see Jean-Marcel Humbert, ed., *Napoléon en Égypte: feu et lumières* (Paris: Hazan/IMA, 2008).
- 14 *L'art arabe d'après les monuments du Kaire depuis le VI^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Morel, 1877).
- 15 Prisse d'Avennes's papers are kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (hereafter BnF; Manuscrits occidentaux, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises n° 20416–20449), where an exhibition on his life and achievements will be presented in March 2011.
- 16 [Émile Prisse d'Avennes], "Les classes pauvres en Égypte," *Le magasin pittoresque* 15, (1847): 42–6, 83–5, 142–4. Like all articles in the journal, these bore no signature, but it has been established that they were authored by Prisse d'Avennes; see Marie-Laure Aurenche, *Edouard*

Charton et l'invention du Magasin pittoresque, 1833–1870 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 333.

- 17 J.-J. Barrau, *Histoire politique des peuples musulmans depuis Mahomet jusqu'à nos jours, suivie de considérations sur les destinées futures de l'Orient* (Paris: C. Thomine, 1842), 340. See *Catalogue of the library of the rev. Henry Wrighston ... to which are added several other small collections, including the library of the late Mons. Prisse d'Avennes, the celebrated Egyptologist containing a series of original drawings of Antiquities, Hieroglyphics by M. Prisse, Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, both series 6 vols, and numerous other works on Egypt, etc., which will be sold by auction by Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, on Monday 17 february 1879 and two following days*, lot 941.

18 Ibid., lot 894.

- 19 Hélène Hartleben, ed., *Lettres et journaux de Champollion* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909), Bibliothèque égyptologique, vol. XXXI, 2e partie, 422; see also *L'Égypte de Jean-François Champollion, Lettres et journaux de voyage (1828–29)* (Paris: Image/magie, 1990), 361. In both editions, "P.-C. Xavier" is easily recognized as Pascal-Xavier Coste.

- 20 Charles Edmond, *L'Égypte à l'Exposition Universelle* (Paris: Dentu, 1867); for a brief biography, see "Chojecki" in *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, ed. M. Prevost and Roman d'Anat (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1959), tome VIII, 1231.

- 21 Charles Edmond, *Souvenirs d'un dépaycé* (Paris: privately published, 1862), 99 in particular.

22 Ibid., 9–10.

- 23 David Le Roy, *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce, considérées du côté de l'histoire et du côté de l'architecture*, trans. David Britt as *The Ruins of the Most Beautiful Monuments of Greece*, introduction by Robin Middleton

(Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004).

24 Ibid., 14. My italics.

- 25 Jeanne Kisacky, "History and Science: Julien-David Leroy's Dualistic Method of Architectural History," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, no. 3 (Sept. 2001): 260–89 (at 274).

26 Mercedes Volait, "De l'anthropologie physique à l'ethnographie artistique": Gustave Le Bon et sa *Civilisation des Arabes* (1884)," *Histoire de l'Art* 60 (2007): 29–39.

27 Gustave Le Bon, *La civilisation des Arabes* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1884), X and 535.

28 Le Bon is indeed known as an early practitioner of travel photography, and published several books of his own pictures; see Nissan N. Perez, *Focus East: Early Photography in the Near East, 1839–1885* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 189–90.

29 Ibid., plate 2. On this object (MIA 139), see Bernard O'Kane, ed., *The Treasures of Islamic Art in the Museums in Cairo* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007), 155.

30 "La marque caractéristique de l'art arabe, c'est l'imagination, le brillant, l'éclat, l'exubérance de l'ornementation, la fantaisie dans les moindres détails. Une race de poètes—et quel poète n'est pas doublé d'un artiste—devenue assez riche pour réaliser tous ses rêves, devait enfanter ces palais fantastiques qui semblent des dentelles de marbre incrustées d'or et de pierres précieuses. Aucun peuple n'avait possédé de telles merveilles, aucun ne les possédera plus." Le Bon, *La civilisation des Arabes*, 400.

31 On Baudry's collection, see Mercedes Volait and Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte, *L'Égypte d'un architecte: Ambroise Baudry (1838–1906)* (Paris: Somogy, 1998), 100.

32 Le Bon, *La civilisation des Arabes*, 288 (on slavery) and 422 (on polygamy).

33 "Les peuples Orientaux ont conservé l'antique usage de se faire servir par des esclaves. Nous nous abstenons à cet égard de toute réflexion pénible; quelque légitimes qu'ils pussent être, nos reproches retomberoient peut-être sur l'Europe, et chacun seroit une critique amère du commerce honteux qu'elle a toléré jusqu'ici: les colonies du nouveau monde et les îles de la mer d'Afrique, théâtres de la barbarie des peuples civilisés, offrent le spectacle d'un esclavage bien plus odieux; [...] le sort des esclaves en Égypte, comme dans tous les pays du Levant, est bien moins à plaindre que celui des esclaves de l'Amérique." Chabrol, "Essai sur les mœurs des habitants modernes de l'Égypte" in *Description de l'Égypte, État moderne*, tome 2, 2e partie, 481.

34 David Urquhart, *The Spirit of the East, illustrated in a journal of travels through Roumeli during an eventful period* (London: H. Colburn, 1838), 2:387.

35 Dominique Jarrassé, "Mythes raciaux et quête de scientificité dans la construction de l'histoire de l'art en France 1840–1870," *Revue de l'art* 146, no. 4 (2004): 61–72.

36 "Si la liberté est chose excellente pour certaines races, la dure loi d'un maître est préférable pour d'autres." Le Bon, *La civilisation des Arabes*, 557.

37 Ibid., 673.

38 "On a prétendu que l'avenir était aux métis. La chose est possible. Pour les peuples qui veulent garder leur niveau dans le monde, je ne le souhaite pas." Le Bon, *La civilisation des Arabes*, 669.

39 Kisacky, "History and Science."

40 *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce ou recueil de dessins et de vues de ces monuments, avec leur histoire, et des réflexions sur le progrès de l'architecture*.

41 Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc, *Histoire de l'habitation humaine: depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, 1875).

- 42 Jean-Michel Leniaud, *Viollet-le-Duc ou les délires du système* (Paris: Mengès, 1994).
- 43 Marie-Noëlle Bourguet, "De la Méditerranée", in *L'invention scientifique de la Méditerranée, Égypte, Morée, Algérie*, ed. Marie-Noëlle Bourguet, Bernard Lepetit and Daniel Nordmann (Paris: Éditions de l'Ehess, 1998), 7–28; Patrice Bret, ed., *L'expédition d'Égypte, une entreprise des Lumières (1798–1801)* (Paris: Technique et documentation, 1999).
- 44 Edme-François Jomard, "Explication du plan de la ville du Kaire et de la Citadelle, contenant la liste des noms de lieux en français et en arabe," *Description de l'Égypte, État moderne* (Paris: Panckoucke, 2e partie, 1822), 589–657.
- 45 Ghislaine Alleaume, "Entre l'inventaire du territoire et la construction de la mémoire: l'œuvre cartographique de l'expédition d'Égypte," in Bret, *L'expédition d'Égypte*, 279–94.
- 46 BnF, Manuscrits occidentaux, nouvelles acquisitions françaises n° 7558, Lettre de Cassas au comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, 21 juillet 1785.
- 47 Louis-François Cassas (1756–1827), *dessinateur et voyageur*, exhibition catalogue (Tours: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1994), 186–206.
- 48 *Catalogue de tableaux, gravures, lithographies et dessins anciens et modernes composés par L.-F. Cassas, peintre-architecte pour les grands ouvrages publiés par lui, sur la Syrie, la Palestine, l'Égypte, etc [...], dont la vente publique aura lieu les 14, 15 et 16 janvier 1878* (Paris: n. p., 1878), lot 237 and 303, 21 and 28.
- 49 Plate 98, also entitled "Grande Pyramide avec tous les genres d'accessoires dont on pouvait supposer que la magnificence égyptienne décorait ces grands monuments"; see Louis-François Cassas, 195.
- 50 Werner Szambien, *Le Musée d'architecture* (Paris: Picard, 1988); idem, "La galerie d'architecture," in Louis-François Cassas, 242–6.
- 51 Christopher Drew Armstrong, "The Architect as Revolutionary Hero: A Monument to Julien-David Leroy," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 66, no. 3 (Sept. 2007): 316–39.
- 52 *Collection des chefs d'œuvre de l'architecture des différens peuples, exécutés en modèles, sous la direction de L.-F. Cassas, décrite et analysée par J. G. Legrand* (Paris: Imprimerie de Leblanc, 1806).
- 53 Ibid., V.
- 54 Ibid., 44–6, 186–7.
- 55 Ibid., 163.
- 56 "Il est peut-être intéressant de recueillir, tandis qu'il est encore temps, les restes de l'ancienne architecture des Arabes, non pas qu'elle doive être imitée, mais parce que c'est un chapitre à joindre à l'histoire de l'architecture." Michel-Ange Lancret, "Notes détachées sur quelques parties de l'architecture des Arabes," in *Description de l'Égypte, État Moderne* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1822), tome 2, 2e partie, 518.
- 57 Now kept in the Bibliothèque Alcazar in Marseilles.
- 58 Leaflet by publisher Firmin-Didot, quoted in Mercedes Volait, "Les monuments de l'architecture arabe," in Pascal Coste, *toutes les Égypte*, ed. Dominique Jacobi (Marseille: Parenthèses/Bibliothèque municipale de Marseille, 1998), 97–131.
- 59 Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960).
- 60 Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, "Les Arts arabes par Jules Bourgoin," *Gazette des architectes et du bâtiment* (1868): 17–20.
- 61 Archives nationales, Paris, F17 3249, Lettre de Jules Bourgoin au Ministre de l'Instruction publique en date du 3 novembre 1891.
- 62 Jules Bourgoin, *La grammaire élémentaire de l'ornement* (Paris: Delagrave, 1880). For a tentative intellectual biography of Jules Bourgoin, see Mercedes Volait, *Fous du Caire: excentriques, architectes et amateurs d'art en Égypte (1867–1914)* (Montpellier: L'Archange Minotaure, 2009), ch. 4 passim.
- 63 Jules Bourgoin, *Études architectoniques et graphiques, mathématiques, arts d'industrie, architecture, arts d'ornement, beaux-arts. Collection raisonnée d'études et de matériaux, de notes et de croquis pour servir à l'histoire, à la théorie, à la technique des arts, et à l'enseignement théorique et pratique dans la famille, l'école et l'atelier* (Paris: Charles Schmidt, éditeur, 1899), tome 1, 26.
- 64 Idem, *La graphique: Collection raisonnée d'études et de matériaux, de notes et de croquis pour servir à l'histoire, à la théorie, à la technique des arts et à l'enseignement dans la famille, dans l'école et dans l'atelier* (Paris: librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1905).
- 65 Bibliothèque de l'INHA, collections Jacques Doucet, Paris, Papiers Jules Bourgoin, Carton 1.
- 66 The expression is quoted from Nicole Hafid-Martin, *Voyage et connaissance*, 188.
- 67 Monique Cottret, *Culture et politique*, 125.
- 68 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 7.
- 69 Georges Roque, *Qu'est-ce que l'art abstrait? Une histoire de l'abstraction en peinture (1860–1960)* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 355–8. On the connection between Islamic ornament and abstraction, see Markus Bröderlin, ed., *Ornament and Abstraction: The Dialogue between non-Western, Modern and Contemporary Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
- 70 Gustave Umbdenstock, "Conclusions et observations relatives aux théories de composition monumentale émises par Cournot et Bourgoin," in *Conférences*

- d'architecture à l'École Polytechnique (Paris, 1911–12), 22; André Lurçat, *Formes, composition et lois d'harmonie: Éléments d'une science de l'esthétique architecturale* (Paris: Éditions Vincent, Fréal & Cie, 1953). I am indebted to Estelle Thibault for both references.
- 71 Christine Buci-Glucksmann's recent book on the "philosophy of ornament" uses Islamic examples to reflect on the crucial function of aesthetics in society: Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Philosophie de l'ornement, d'Orient en Occident* (Paris: Galilée, 2008).
- 72 See, for instance, "Details of Turkish or Saracenic Architecture in various Moschs, fountains, tombs at Constantinople," from vol. 5 of his albums kept in the Benaki Museum, Athens, reproduced in David Watkin and Philip Hewat-Jaboor, eds., *Thomas Hope, Regency Designer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 295.
- 73 Daniela Mondini, "Apprendre à voir l'histoire de l'art, le discours visuel des planches de *l'Histoire de l'art par les monuments* de Seroux d'Angicourt," in *Histoire de l'histoire de l'art en France au XIXe siècle*, Roland Recht et al., eds. (Paris: La Documentation française, 2008), 153–66.
- 74 Rémi Labrusse, ed., *Purs décors? Arts de l'Islam, regards du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Les arts décoratifs, 2007).
- 75 For a discussion of the complex relationship between knowledge of Middle Eastern locales in the nineteenth and twentieth century and Islamic Revival architecture in Europe and beyond, see Nabila Oulebsir and Mercedes Volait, eds., *L'architecture orientaliste, entre images et savoirs* (Paris: Picard, 2009).
- 76 Stéphane Van Damme, *Paris, capitale de la philosophie, de la Fronde à la Révolution* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005).
- 77 Volney, *Les Ruines, ou Méditation sur les révolutions des empires* (Paris: Desenne, Volland, Plassan, 1791).

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